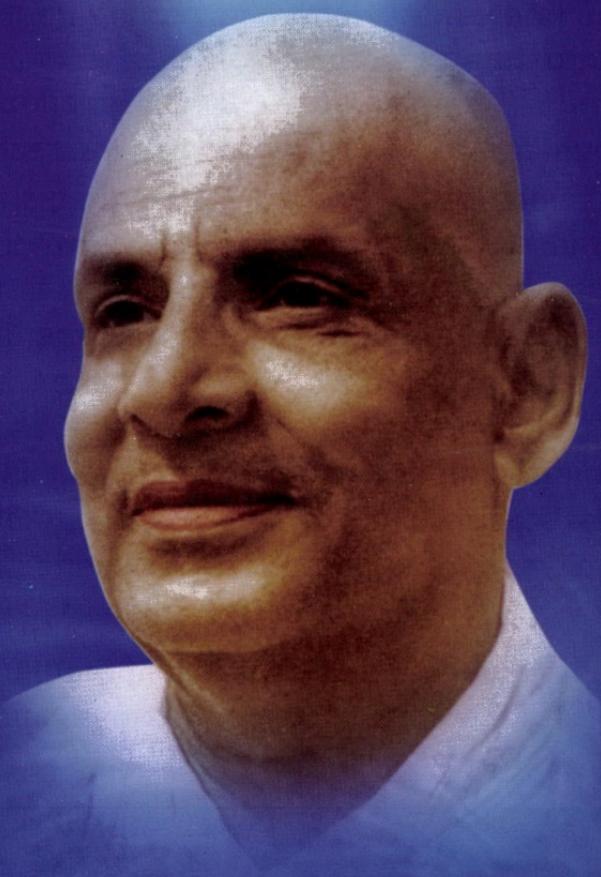


SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES



SWAMI SIVANANDA

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[AMRITA ANUBHAVA]

Sri Swami Sivananda



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SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

Born on the 8th September, 1887, in the illustrious family of Sage Appayya Dikshitar and several other renowned saints and savants, Sri Swami Sivananda had a natural flair for a life devoted to the study and practice of Vedanta. Added to this was an inborn eagerness to serve all and an innate feeling of unity with all mankind.

His passion for service drew him to the medical career; and soon he gravitated to where he thought that his service was most needed. Malaya claimed him. He had earlier been editing a health journal and wrote extensively on health problems. He discovered that people needed right knowledge most of all; dissemination of that knowledge he espoused as his own mission.

It was divine dispensation and the blessing of God upon mankind that the doctor of body and mind renounced his career and took to a life of renunciation to qualify for ministering to the soul of man. He settled down at Rishikesh in 1924, practised intense austerities and shone as a great Yogi, saint, sage and Jivanmukta.

In 1932 Swami Sivananda started the Sivanandashram. In 1936 was born The Divine Life Society. In 1948 the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy was organised. Dissemination of spiritual knowledge and training of people in Yoga and Vedanta were their aim and object. In 1950 Swamiji undertook a lightning tour of India and Ceylon. In 1953 Swamiji convened a 'World Parliament of Religions'. Swamiji is the author of over 300 volumes and has disciples all over the world, belonging to all nationalities, religions and creeds. To read Swamiji's works is to drink at the Fountain of Wisdom Supreme. On 14th July, 1963 Swamiji entered Mahasamadhi.

WHAT LIFE HAS TAUGHT ME

It was, I should say, by a flash that I came to the conclusion early in my life that human life is not complete with its observable activities and that there is something above human perception controlling and directing all that is visible. I may boldly say that I began to perceive the realities behind what we call life on earth. The unrest and feverish anxiety that characterise man's ordinary existence here bespeak a higher goal that he has to reach one day or the other.

When man gets entangled in selfishness, greed, lust and hatred, he naturally forgets what is beneath his own skin. Materialism and scepticism reign supreme. He gets irritated by small things and begins to fight. In short, man is miserable. The doctor's profession gave me ample evidence of the sufferings of this world. I found concrete proofs of the great saying: "*Sarvam duhkham vivekinah.*" I was blessed with a new vision and perspective. I was deeply convinced that there must be a place—a sweet home of pristine glory and purity and divine splendour—where absolute security, perfect peace and happiness can be enjoyed eternally. In conformity with the dictum of the Sruti, I renounced the world, and felt that I belonged to the whole world.

A course of severe self-discipline and penance endowed me with enough strength to move unscathed amidst the vicissitudes of the world-phenomena. And I began to feel the great good it would be to humanity if I could share this new vision with one and all. I called my instrument of work *The Divine Life Society*.

Side by side, the stirring events since the advent of the twentieth century had their effect upon all keen-minded people. The horrors of past and possible wars and the consequent suf-

fering touched the minds of people. It was not difficult to see that the pains of mankind were mostly brought on by its own deeds. To awaken man to his errors and follies and to make him mend his ways, so that he may utilise his life for attaining worthier ends, was felt to be the urgent need of the time. As if in answer to this need, I saw the birth of the Divine Life Mission, with its task of rescuing man from the forces of the lower nature and raising him to the consciousness of his true relation to the cosmos. This is the work of rousing the religious consciousness, an awareness of the essential Divinity of man.

Not by mere argument or discussion can religion be taught or understood. Not by precepts or canons of teaching alone can you make one religious. It requires a peculiar atonement with one's vast environment, an ability to feel the deepest as well as the vastest, a genuine sympathy with creation. Religion is living, not speaking or showing. I hold that whatever be one's religion, whoever be the prophet adored, whichever be the language or the country, whatever be one's age or sex, one can be religious provided the true implication of that hallowed term TAPAS, which essentially means any form of self-control, is made capable of being practised in daily life to the extent possible for one in the environment and under the circumstances in which one is placed.

I hold that real religion is the religion of the heart. The heart must be purified first. Truth, love and purity are the basis of real religion. Control over the baser nature, conquest of the mind, cultivation of virtues, service of humanity, goodwill, fellowship and amity constitute the fundamentals of true religion. These ideals are included in the principles of The Divine Life Society. And I try to teach them mostly by example which I consider to be weightier than all precepts.

The modern thinker has neither the requisite time nor the patience to perform rigorous Tapas and austere religious practices; and many of these are even being relegated to the level of

superstition. In order to give the present generation the benefit of real Tapas in the true religious sense, to reveal to them its real significance and to convince them of its meaning and efficacy, I held up my torch of Divine Life, which is a system of religious life suited to one and all, which can be practised by the recluse and the office-goer alike, which can become intelligible to the scholar and the rustic in its different stages and phases. This is a religion which is not other than what is essential to give meaning to the daily duties of the human being. The beauty in 'Divine Life' is its simplicity and applicability to the everyday affairs of the ordinary man. It is immaterial whether one goes to the church or the mosque or the Mandir for offering his prayers, for all prayers are heard by the One.

The average seeker after Truth is often deceived by the caprices of his mind. A person who takes to the spiritual path is bewildered before he reaches the end of his journey, and is naturally tempted to relax his efforts halfway. Many are the pitfalls, but those who plod on steadily are sure to reach the goal of life which is universality of being, knowledge and joy. I have laid great emphasis in all my writings upon the discipline of the turbulent senses, conquest of the mind, purification of the heart, and attainment of inner peace and strength, suited to the different stages in evolution.

I have learnt that it is the foremost duty of man to learn to give, give in charity, give in plenty, give with love, give without any expectation of consequence, because one does not lose anything by giving—on the other hand the giver is given back a thousandfold. Charity is not merely an act of offering certain material goods, for charity is incomplete without charity of disposition, charity of feeling, charity of understanding, knowledge and attitude to others. *Charity is self-sacrifice in different levels of one's being.* Charity in the highest sense I understand to be equivalent to Jnana-Yajna.

Similarly I consider that goodness of being and doing constitutes the rock-bottom of one's life. By goodness I mean the capacity to feel with others and live and feel as others do, and be in a position to act so that no one is hurt by the act. Goodness is the face of Godliness. I think that to be good in reality, in the innermost recesses of one's heart, is not easy, though it may appear to be simple as a teaching. It is one of the hardest of things on earth, if only one would be honest to oneself.

There is no physical world for me. What I see I see as the glorious manifestation of the Almighty. I rejoice when I behold the Purusha with thousands of heads and thousands of eyes and feet, that *Sahasrasirsha Purusha!* When I serve persons I see not the persons but Him of whom they are the limbs. I learn to be humble before the Mighty Being whose breath we breathe and whose joy we enjoy. I do not think there is anything more to teach or to learn. Here is the cream of religion, the quintessence of philosophy, that which anyone really needs.

The philosophy I hold is neither a dreamy, subjective, world-negating doctrine of illusion, nor a crude world-affirming theory of sense-ridden humanism. It is the fact of the divinity of the universe, the immortality of the soul of man, the unity of creation with the Absolute, that I feel as the only doctrine worth considering. As the one Brahman appears as the diverse universe in all the planes of its manifestation, the aspirant has to pay his homage to the lower manifestations before he steps into the higher. Sound health, clear understanding, deep knowledge, a powerful will and moral integrity are all necessary parts of the process of the realisation of the Ideal of humanity as a whole. To adjust, adapt and accommodate, to see good in everything and bring to effective use all the principles of Nature in the process of evolution towards Self-realisation along the path of an integrated adjustment of the human powers and faculties are some of the main factors that go to build up a true philosophy of life. For me philosophy is not merely a love of wisdom but actual possession of it. In all my writings I have prescribed meth-

ods for overcoming and mastering the physical, vital, mental and the intellectual layers of consciousness in order to be able to proceed with the Sadhana for self-perfection. The self-perfected ones are the *sarvabhuta-hite ratah*.

To behold the Atman in every being or form, to feel Brahman everywhere, at all times, and in all conditions of life, to see, hear, taste and feel everything as the Atman is my creed. To live in Brahman, to melt in Brahman and to dissolve in Brahman is my creed. By dwelling in such union, to utilise the hands, mind, senses and the body for the service of humanity, for singing the Names of the Lord, for elevating the devotees, for giving instructions to sincere aspirants and disseminating knowledge throughout the world, is my creed, if you call it one. To be a cosmic friend and cosmic benefactor, a friend of the poor, the forlorn, the helpless and the fallen is my creed. It is my sacred creed to serve sick persons, to nurse them with care, sympathy and love, to cheer the depressed, to infuse power and joy in all, to feel oneness with each and everyone, and to treat all with equal vision. In my highest creed there are neither peasants nor kings, neither beggars nor emperors, neither males nor females, neither teachers nor students. I love to live, move and have my being in this realm indescribable.

The first step is often the most difficult one. But once it is taken the rest becomes easy. There is a need for more of courage and patience on the part of people. They usually shirk, hesitate and are frightened. All this is due to ignorance of one's true duty. A certain amount of education and culture is necessary to have a sufficiently clear grasp of one's position in this world. Our educational system needs an overhauling, for it is now floating on the surface without touching the depths of man. To achieve this, cooperation should come not only from society but also from the Government. Success is difficult without mutual help. The head and heart should go hand in hand, and the ideal and the real should have a close relation. To work with this knowledge is Karma-Yoga. The Lord has declared this truth in

the Bhagavad Gita. I pray that this supreme ideal be actualised in the daily life of every individual, and there be a veritable heaven on earth. This is not merely a wish,—this is a possibility and a fact that cannot be gainsaid. This is to be realised if life is to mean what it ought really to mean.

Sivananda

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SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

Chapter One

NATURE AND STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Nature of Consciousness

It is extremely difficult to define what consciousness means. Words and languages are imperfect. They cannot adequately express your thoughts and ideas.

There are different kinds of consciousness. There are physical consciousness, astral consciousness, mental consciousness, supra-mental consciousness or lower Prakamya or Prajna consciousness, cosmic consciousness, superconsciousness, subconsciousness, unconsciousness, dream consciousness, supra-cosmic consciousness, dual or double consciousness, multiple consciousness, higher Prakamya, Virat consciousness, Hiranyagarbha consciousness, Divine consciousness or Purushottama consciousness and lastly the Highest Nirguna Para Brahman consciousness or Absolute consciousness *per se*.

In the waking state (Jagradavastha of Vedantins), you are conscious of this physical plane. You see, you feel, you think, you know, you will, you exert (perception or sensation, cognition, emotion, or affection, or cogitation, volition, conation—Prayatna). This is the physical consciousness.

When you transcend the physical body and operate on the astral plane with the astral body, you will have astral consciousness. You will move, and talk with astral entities.

When you operate in the mental plane with the mental body, you will have mental consciousness. You will identify yourself now with the mind just as you identify yourself with the physical body. You will have psychic Siddhis as clairvoy-

ance, clairaudience, psychometry, telepathy, thought-reading, etc. You will converse here with the mental entities. Here the language is one.

When you transcend the mind you will identify yourself with your individual Karana Sarira or causal body. You will have lower Divya Drishti. Here you will have an expanded consciousness. You will have very subtle Etheric body and operate in an Etheric plane. You will have tremendous powers. You will be in union with the Divine Consciousness. The veil between you and Brahman is very thin now. If you exert you can peep into Brahman and can have glimpses of Brahmic consciousness. This is Prajna consciousness or lower Prakamya. You will be an occupant of Satyaloka or Hiranyagarbhaloka with the individual Karana Sarira. When you universalise now you can become one with Divine consciousness. You will have the whole cosmic consciousness. This is Purushottama consciousness with Adi Sakti or Para Prakriti or Avyaktam. This is Higher Prakamya.

When you throw off the veil of Adi Sakti also, you will become one with pure, Nirguna, Para Brahman, Ananta consciousness, the Highest end of human life (Kaivalya). It is very difficult to rest here for a long time.

Between Hiranyagarbha and Ishvara there is the veil of Avyaktam.

There is one school of thought that says that Ishvara is a reflection in Maya. This is Abhasavada or doctrine of reflection. An objector says: "When there is only one thing, how can there be a reflection? Further if Ishvara is a reflection in Maya, how will He be able to control Maya? This is not right."

Svarupa Lakshana of Brahman is Sat-Chit-Ananda. Tatastha Lakshana of Brahman is Ishvara with powers of omnipotence, omniscience, etc.

When we take the Tatastha Lakshana of Brahman, Ishvara has full consciousness of Nirguna Brahman, as well as the

whole cosmic consciousness. Here Saguna Brahman is identical with pure Nirguna Brahman. This is Avachheda Vada. This is the doctrine of limitation.

There is only Nirguna Brahman. Saguna Brahman is a mere appearance for the sake of pious meditation of Bhaktas.

Four Kinds of Consciousness

There are four types of consciousness—consciousness, subconsciousness, superconsciousness and double consciousness.

Consciousness means Prajna. There is physical consciousness. One is conscious of his body and his surroundings—the visible objects of this universe. In mental consciousness one feels the operations of the mind, his sentiments, thoughts and feelings. Very few people have got mental consciousness. They have got only consciousness of the body. It is only those who have got subtle intellect, who have got a knowledge of psychology, who are practising a little bit of concentration, meditation and introspection, that will be able to know about mental consciousness.

Then comes the subconscious wherein all the Samskaras are stored up. It is like a lumber room. From the subconscious through memory, ideas come to the surface of the mind, to the conscious. Subconscious is called Chitta. In Vedanta 'Chit' is pure consciousness, absolute consciousness, Brahmic consciousness, supreme consciousness. 'Chitta' is subconscious, and Chit is Para Brahman. You do an action. You desire an object and experience it. The experience goes to subconscious mind. It remains there until you get a stimulus from the external world or from within through memory. Then the ideas and Samskaras come to the surface of the mind. Vasana becomes a Samskara and Samskara becomes a Vasana. Action produces an impression and impression goads you to repeat an action again. This is a vicious circle. There is no end for it. It is the Samskaras

imprinted on the subconscious mind that force you to take re-birth again and again. These Samskaras can only be destroyed by knowledge of Brahman. Then alone you are free from births and deaths and you become a Jivanmukta or Mukta Purusha. You will have to be careful in producing impressions in the subconscious mind. Do good deeds. Have sublime divine thoughts. Do Japa and Kirtan. This will produce good Samskaras and destroy the evil impressions. Be good and do good and practise meditation. You can generate good Samskaras in the subconscious mind.

Then we have got superconscious state. That is Para Brahman, where there are neither names nor forms, neither darkness nor light, neither east nor west, nor visible objects. It is pure Absolute Consciousness, consciousness per se. The goal of life is attainment of the superconscious state. It is called Nirvikalpa Samadhi, Asamprajnata Samadhi. We have to transcend the body and the mind and enter into the superconscious state through meditation. After equipping oneself with the four means one should practise hearing, reflection and Nididhyasana. Then he will get Atma-Sakshatkara.

Below the superconscious state according to Raja Yoga there are various kinds of Savikalpa Samadhis. In Vedanta also there are Savikalpa Samadhis. Savitarka, Nirvitarka, Savichara, Nirvichara, Sananda, and Sasmita are Savikalpa Samadhis according to Raja Yoga. Antar Drishyanuvid, Antah Sabdanuvid, Bahya Drishyanuvid, Bahya Sabdanuvid are forms of Savikalpa Samadhis according to Vedanta. These are lower stages. There are Triputi or triad—the knower, knowledge and the known, the seer, sight and the seen—and above these stages there is Asamprajnata Samadhi or Nirvikalpa Samadhi or Nirbijja Samadhi. There are no Vrittis, no Vasanas, no imagination, no Sankalpas, in that state. There is only pure consciousness. That is our goal. That is Para Brahman.

In double consciousness the sage is resting in his own Svarupa enjoying the supreme bliss, and at the same time he works in this world like Janaka. He has double consciousness. He has not forgotten his own pure, Brahmic state, and at the same time he has consciousness of the world. Just as a crow has got only one eye, but it turns here and there its socket, even so, the Jivanmukta resting in his own Svarupa utilises his mind for serving humanity. If the mind is completely destroyed as in a Videhamukta, he cannot work in this world. Then we will have no Jivanmuktas to teach the aspirants. A certain portion of Avidya remains, Sattvic Vasana remains, called Lesha Avidya, where there is Svarupa Manonasa of the mind. In a Jivanmukta the whole mind is not destroyed. Rajas and Tamas are destroyed, but Sattvic egoism remains. It is through this that he beholds the world within himself. In a Videhamukta the whole mind is destroyed. He is absorbed in Para Brahman completely.

Through Sadhana the aspirant raises the Brahmakara Vritti. He thinks, "I am Akhanda-Ekarasa-Chinmatra Brahman, (I am one indivisible, homogeneous essence), I am Nitya-Suddha-Svarupa, I am Nitya-Bodha-Svarupa, I am Nitya-Tripti-Svarupa (I am ever pure, I am pure consciousness, I am eternal satisfaction), I am Sat-Chit-Ananda-Svarupa (I am an embodiment of existence-knowledge-bliss)." There is Achintya Sakti (unthinkable power), there is Ananta Sakti (infinite power) in these words. These thoughts destroy all Vishayakara Vrittis and raise the Brahmakara Vritti. Thought of Brahman alone remains. This Brahmakara Vritti destroys the original Avidya, and the aspirant rests in his own Svarupa.

In Western philosophy they used the word intuition. The understanding of the western philosophers of the word 'intuition' is different from the understanding of intuition by the eastern philosophers. Their intuition is not the same intuition conceived of by the eastern philosophers. Intuition is a faculty, a higher wisdom, Jnana-Chakshus, which Sanjaya and Arjuna had. Intuition sometimes refers to Para Brahman Himself, the

Existence Whole. Intuition does not contradict reason. It fulfils it, and it is above reason. It is the door or gateway to Para Brahman, to Knowledge of Brahman.

Arjuna had Cosmic Consciousness, Visvarupa-darshan. Above Cosmic Consciousness is Super-cosmic state. Ishvara has got Cosmic Consciousness as well as Supercosmic Consciousness. Bhaktas who go to Satyaloka and dwell with Hiranyagarbha experience Cosmic Consciousness. They have got full knowledge of the process of creation of this world, of the Tanmatras, mind, Mahat. They have got the experience of Cosmos. That is called Cosmic Consciousness.

The highest state of consciousness is Turiya. To some Jivanmuktas the world appears like a dream. To some Jivanmuktas it appears like deep sleep,—according to the Sattvic egoism present in them. Gradually the sage ascends the highest rung in the ladder of wisdom. In the last stage he has no knowledge of the world. He would not take food by himself. He has to be fed. Mauni Swamiji of Kumbakonam was in the last stage. Akalkot Swamiji had also this experience. They had no knowledge of this world. They were completely absorbed in their Selves. They had withdrawn themselves completely from the world-consciousness, whereas sages like Janaka had a slight experience of the world. So Janaka was able to rule the kingdom. Jnanins are of two kinds—Samadhi Jnanins and Vyavaharic Jnanins. Those sages who work in this world with a slight feeling of this world are called Vyavaharic sages. Those sages who are absorbed in Samadhi, who cannot work for the well-being of this world, are called Samadhi Jnanins.

So let us get ourselves established in Para Brahman and enjoy the bliss of the Eternal and radiate joy and bliss to the world and work for the solidarity of the world. Through Sadhana, meditation, discipline, constant Abhyasa and Vairagya, may you all become Jivanmuktas in this very birth.

Aspects of Consciousness

The disciple asks:

I find that the four different aspects of consciousness, namely, Jagrat, Svapna, Sushupti and Turiya are mutually exclusive of each other in the sense that the Jivatma is not aware of the other aspects when it is aware of one of them. The common link, of course, is the Jivatma himself. Does it follow that all these aspects in fact coexist all the time but that the Jivatma is aware of only one at a time? Why so?

Do you think that this division in our consciousness made by ancient Rishis has anything in common with the recent divisions of consciousness, such as consciousness, self-consciousness, subconsciousness, the unconscious and superconsciousness?

Which division could we say is more scientific and more true to experience?

The Guru replies:

The Avasthas may be loosely stated to be exclusive but they are not wholly so. In Turiya all the lower three states are 'included' and absorbed. For, Turiya totally resolves them on to the pure Light of Knowledge-Consciousness. Into It they subside and It transcends them all.

However the 'Jivatma' is not the common link beneath the four Avasthas but Turiya is the common link. It is the substratum, the basic consciousness or the Svarupa Chaitanya underlying all. Strictly speaking, Turiya is not a state, though referred to as the fourth. Turiya is verily Brahman. It is an embodiment of peace and bliss. As already stated, it is the substratum for the other three states, viz., the waking, the dreaming and the sleeping. It pervades the three states. It is Absolute Being. Therefore, it is transcendental. It is Svatah-Siddha or self-proved. Hence it is not 'consciousness' in the ordinary sense in which that term is used, but rather it is consciousness in its transcendental Essence.

of which the lower relative states of consciousness are but reflections.

Regarding the awareness of the Jivatma, it is true that he experiences one state at a time. This 'compartmental experience,' as it were, is due to the fact that the three states overlap one another so that when one functions the other is covered over and latent, so to say. One particular Guna dominates the field of consciousness and covers up the other two. With the dawn of Turiya, however, this delimitation disappears. You are now raised into cosmic consciousness. The Jivatma consciousness is replaced by Visvatma consciousness.

The conscious, subconscious, unconscious and superconscious states are in some respects similar to the classification of the ancient, viz., the Jagrat, Svapna, Sushupti and Turiya states of consciousness. But they are not identical. The Jagrat state of consciousness mentioned in the Upanishads has more metaphysical implications than the conscious state of psychologists. Similar is the case with the Svapna and Sushupti states. The ancient Hindu philosophers meant by the Jagrat consciousness not merely the mental consciousness which when reflected through the psychoses of the mind is called the Jiva in the Jagrat state. Svapna is the state where the mind functions independent of the senses on the basis of the impressions made in it during waking experience. The Sushupti state is not really one of absolute unconsciousness but one in which the psychoses of the mind get themselves wound up and are reduced to a state of Tamas through which the consciousness of the Supreme Self cannot be reflected. The fundamental difference between the ancient classification made in the Upanishads and the one made by modern psychologists is that the former takes into consideration the transcendental consciousness as the basis of the appearance of the three relative states while the latter makes a mere empirical study of the behaviour of the mind as observed by the analytical intellect. The Superconscious state, however, can be identified with the Turiya provided of course the former

is not taken to be the same as that higher light of the mind which is called intuition and which is the gateway to the realisation of Turiya, but not identical with it.

We cannot but admit that the division and classification made by the ancient scientists of the spirit is the more correct because it is not the result of inference through observation but in the nature of an authoritative declaration based upon actual super-sensual cognition and direct experience by the seer.

The ultimate light upon this highly subtle matter has, however, to come through personal realisation alone. Perfect inward renunciation, total purification and earnest Sadhana and meditation are means to attain such realisation. The seeker has to be resolutely bold and active in his quest through patience and perseverance upon this spiritual path till the ultimate goal is attained.

The Turiya State

The disciple asks:

Mandukya Upanishad deals more or less in a scientific manner with the four stages, or rather aspects of our consciousness. With three, we are all quite familiar. The question is of the Turiya, which is described as 'Prapanchopashamam.'

Might it be that our consciousness, which is usually at home with diversity, when forced by will to fix itself on absolute unity, loses itself and is in the state of a kind of continuous trance as Gheranda Samhita puts it? But since our consciousness is not entirely independent of its physical basis, the human brain-centre, after a time it returns and again finds the diversity from which it had taken temporary leave.

Of course, it is open to the aspirant to force consciousness not to return at all, in which case the Turiya stage would be the final stage and consciousness would not return to the body, leaving it as a shell of dead matter.

The question, however, is whether it is the individual that can decide the return of his consciousness from Turiya, or is it the Universal Will.

The Guru replies:

Regarding the question of Turiya, referred to as ‘Prapanchopashamam,’ I must say that the whole question requires to be viewed from a different perspective altogether; for, in fact, it is not so much a case of Consciousness being “usually at home with diversity,” and thence being “forced by will to fix itself on absolute unity”; but on the contrary, it is rather a matter of CONSCIOUSNESS which is eternally characterised by Self-experience of Absolute Unity being enabled to revert into and regain its pristine Unity-awareness, which is its essential Being, by a constant, purposeful, and persistent negation of and withdrawal from the phenomenal experience (and the endless diversities connoted thereby) into which it has temporarily got involved through the original Cosmic Nescience. This descent into Ajnana is like unto a brief sleep of delusion—Moha-Nidra. Thus it should be known that, as compared with the stupendous state of Time-transcendent Eternity, this condition of Jiva-consciousness is but a momentary, passing experience, which is unnatural to our essential Being. THAT is the real state where our consciousness is ever at home, for that indeed is ‘Sva-Svarupa’, that indeed the ‘Nija Dhama’.

Pure Consciousness is absolutely independent of any physical basis whatsoever. Even with reference to the individual Jiva’s consciousness, here too consciousness becomes dependent upon its physical basis in so far as it is called upon to be manifest and function in physical and mental levels in the first two states, i.e., the waking and the dream, Jagrat and Svapna. Even in the human being, consciousness does become independent of its physical moorings in the state of Sushupti when it withdraws itself into the subtle supra-physical Puritat Nadi in the Hridaya, which is not in the Sthula Sarira. Here, conscious-

ness is upon the subtler astral or psychic level. But, of course, when it has once again to function upon the mental and physical planes upon waking, it has inevitably to take up its stand in and function through the mind and senses. However, all this is with reference to the vast generality of human mind that is totally caught up in Ajnana and which has not taken to Yoga. It is with reference to such in whom spiritual consciousness has not yet been awakened. All such belongings to this class (in other words, practically the vast majority of mankind) are but aware only of physical consciousness and mental consciousness. But a definite and significant change does take place in the consciousness of the individual who takes recourse to Yoga. He experiences, through rising up in the Yoga Marga, an ascent into a higher level of awareness as a result of the awakening of spiritual consciousness to that degree there comes about a progressive independence of the physical aspect of the man. Reaching perfection, the Yogi attains the highest super-consciousness. This is entirely independent of all physical basis. This is Turiya.

At this stage regarding the consciousness, return from which it had taken "temporary leave", and regarding "whether it is the individual that can decide the return of his consciousness from Turiya, or is it the Universal Will?"—these points are of particular interest, because their consideration serves to specially bring light to one or two of the most distinctive features that characterise the Turiya Chaitanya. To take the first point, when the experience of Superconsciousness in the highest Samadhi or the Turiya experience is attained, the consciousness never again experiences the same vision that it had previous to this experience. Henceforth the Yogi returns with knowledge, an Enlightened Being. It is a consciousness with the Light of Knowledge. The Yogi's vision of the world is not the vision of the man in ignorance, who perceives the diversity and takes it to be real. The Yogi's vision (upon return from Turiya experience) is based upon knowledge. It perceives not diversity, but Unity in diversity. Thenceforth his Unity consciousness becomes the

basis of his perception. The entire world of diversity stands before his vision, in a different light altogether. This vision is indescribable.

Regarding the second point, actually this question does not arise, because in the state of Turiya the individuality is no more. It gets merged and absorbed into the Cosmic or the Universal Consciousness. This is precisely what is implied by 'Prapanchopashamam.' 'Prapancha' or world-experience is, in essence, nothing but the individual consciousness. Thus it must be known that in Turiya there is at-one-ment and the individual and Universal do not exist as two factors, but a condition of identity prevails. Hence it is the Universal Will that operates.

Chapter Two

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

An Analytical Study of Cosmic Consciousness

What Is Cosmic Consciousness

The state of Cosmic Consciousness is beyond description. It induces awe, supreme joy and unalloyed felicity. This state of cosmic consciousness is below the absolute consciousness (Nirguna-Brahmic consciousness) wherein the seer, sight, the things seen, or the knower, knowable and knowledge, or the subject and object, become one. In cosmic consciousness there is yet the seer and the seen.

Cosmic consciousness is perfect awareness of the oneness of life. The Yogi feels that the universe is filled with one life, that there is no such thing as blind force or dead matter and that all is alive, vibrating and intelligent. He experiences a sense of universality, a consciousness of Eternal Life. He who has cosmic consciousness feels that the universe is all his. He is one with the Supreme Lord, with the Universal Knowledge and Life. He gets the eye celestial and experiences bliss beyond understanding and description.

A Yogi of cosmic consciousness develops the cosmic sense and has universal understanding. He is conscious of being in the immediate presence of God. During illumination the flood-gate of joy breaks and he realises that the deep, everlasting fountain of joy exists in every heart, that the immortal life underlies all beings, that the eternal, all-embracing, all-inclusive love envelops, supports and guides every particle, every atom of creation. Sin, sorrow, death are now but words for him without meaning. He feels the elixir of life, the nectar of immortality flowing in his veins. His face shines with a radiant light.

His eyes are lustrous. They are pools of joy and bliss. He feels that the entire world is bathed in the sea of satisfying love, which is the very essence of life. He feels that the whole world is his body, that all hands and all feet are his. Chair, table, tree—all have a cosmic significance. He could never feel strange or alien to any place.

Cosmic consciousness is an inherent, natural faculty of all men and women. It is inactive or non-functioning in the majority of human beings. Yogic training and discipline are necessary to awaken the exalted blissful state of cosmic consciousness.

The four kinds of Mukti and the Bhava-Samadhi of Bhaktas, the lower Samadhis of a Raja Yogi (viz., Savitarka, Savichara, Nirvichara, Sananda, Sasmita, Ritambhara Prajna, etc.), and the lower Savikalpa Samadhis (viz., Shabdanuvid, Drishyanuvid) of a Vedantin all lead to the experience of cosmic consciousness. The ways of approach may be different but the fruit is the same. The experiences are common. Intuition, revelation, inspiration, ecstasy—are synonymous terms.

Super Sublime State

Wordsworth in his poem “Tintern Abbey” describes Samadhi as follows:

“... That blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood
In which the affections gently lead us on,
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In Body, and become a living soul.
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.”

The state of cosmic consciousness is grand and sublime. It induces awe, supreme joy and highest, unalloyed felicity, free from pain, sorrow and fear. This state of cosmic consciousness is below the absolute consciousness or Nirguna Brahmic Consciousness wherein the seer, sight and the things seen, or the knower, knowable and knowledge, or the subject and object, become one. In cosmic consciousness there is yet the seer and the seen. It is doubtless a very subtle experience. It is divine experience. It is a revelation of the Karana Jagat wherein the types are realised. Brahmic consciousness is the experience of Maha-Karana wherein there is neither time, space nor causation. It is the unconditioned, ineffable state. Srutis describe it negatively—Neti, Neti—not this, not this. “*Yato vacho nivartante aprapya manasa saha anandam brahmano vidvan na bibheti kadachana*”—the mind and speech return back from it baffled as they are not able to grasp and describe it; the wise who knows the Brahman which is bliss is not afraid of anything at any time.”

Sri Sankara, Dattatreya, Vama Deva, Jada Bharata, Mansoor, Shams Tabriez, Madalasa, Yajnavalkya had the experience of super-cosmic consciousness whereas Ramdas, Tulasi Das, Kabir, Ramanuja, Mira, Gouranga, Madhva, Hafiz, Tukaram, Lord Jesus, Lord Buddha had experience of cosmic consciousness. The pure Brahmic consciousness is to be felt by the Sadhaka. It cannot be described in words. The language is imperfect. The cosmic consciousness is the experience of Brahma-Loka. It is the consciousness of Brahman or Hiranyagarbha. The Yogi acquires all Divine Aishvaryas. He who experiences cosmic consciousness attains many kinds of Siddhis, which are described in Bhagavata and Raja Yoga of Patanjali Maharshi.

Arjuna, Sanjaya, Devaki had this experience of cosmic consciousness. Yasoda saw the whole Virat in the mouth of Bala Krishna. The Gita describes this state of consciousness through the mouth of Arjuna in these words: “The mighty form,

with many mouths and eyes, long-armed, with thighs and feet innumerable, vast bosomed, set with many fearful teeth; radiant Thou touchest heaven, rainbow-hued, with opened mouths, eyes on every side, all-swallowing, fiery-tongued, Thou lickest up mankind devouring all into Thy gaping mouths, tremendous-toothed and terrible to see; some, caught within the gaps between thy teeth, are seen, their heads to powder crushed and ground.”

Western Concept of Cosmic Consciousness

In the West also people have to recognise the truth about cosmic consciousness when one rises above body-consciousness. Some have also tasted and experienced this state. In France, Professor Bergson was preaching about intuition which transcends reason but does not contradict it. Bucke describes cosmic consciousness as follows: “Cosmic consciousness is a third form, which is as far above self-consciousness as is that above simple consciousness. It is Supra-conceptual. The cosmic consciousness, as its name implies, is the life and order of the universe. Along with the consciousness of the cosmos there occurs an intellectual enlightenment, which alone would place the individual on a new plane of existence. To this is added a state of moral exaltation, an indescribable feeling of elation and joyousness and a quickening of the moral sense, which is fully as striking and more important, both to the race and the individual, that is the enhanced intellectual power. With these comes what may be called a sense of immortality, a consciousness of eternal life, not a conviction that he shall have it, but the consciousness that he has it already.”

Celestial Vision

The eye celestial usually comes to a Yogi (mystic) who has advanced much in mysticism. But it is not possible for everyone to get this celestial eye, as each and every one cannot be a mystic. Sri Krishna therefore said to Arjuna, “In the form in which

you have seen Me, I cannot be seen even by means of Vedas, by austerities, by gifts or by sacrifices." Gita: Ch. XI-53.

He who gets the experience of supra-cosmic consciousness has the feeling of Apta Kama (one who has obtained all that he desires). He feels, "There is nothing more to be known by me."

The Jiva-hood has gone now. The little "I" has melted. The differentiating mind that splits up has vanished. All barriers, all sense of duality, differences and separateness have disappeared. There is no idea of time and space. There is only Eternity. The Jiva has realised his identity with Brahman. The ideas of caste, creed and colour have gone now. When he becomes a Brahma-Varishtha when he enters the seventh stage of Jnana or Turiyatita, even the slight body-consciousness, which was in a state of Samskara or mental retentum disappears. He has to be fed by the spectators. The world completely disappears for him. He experiences the state described by Ajati-Vadin or the utterance of Srutis *Neha nana-asti kinchana*—there is no such thing as diversity.

The world is a mental creation. It is mere impression only. There is no world during sleep. You may argue that the world exists for the waking man. Yes, quite true. If there is mind, there is world. What is mind then? It is a bundle of impressions, ideas, habits. The two currents, Raga-Dvesha, keep up the life of the mind. If these two currents are destroyed, there is death for the mind. It is called Manonasa. That Yogi who has achieved Manonasa cannot perceive the world. If you can consciously destroy the mind through Samadhi, this world disappears. Just as you see the rope only when the Bhranti of snake has vanished, so also you see Brahman only when the Bhranti of world and body has disappeared by knowledge of the Self.

Many scientists and students of science may not believe me. Do this practice now. Shut yourself up in a room for a week. Cut off all connections. Do not read newspapers. Observe per-

fect Mauna (silence) also. Then feel how far the impressions of the world remain in your mind. You will feel that the world is a dream. If you practise for a long time, you will realise the truth of my statement. The world is a solid reality for a man of passion and greed, for a sensualist who has gross mind. For a Yogi of cosmic consciousness, it dwindles into an airy nothing.

Supreme Awareness

Cosmic consciousness is the fruit of Chaitanya Samadhi, where the Yogi feels perfect ‘awareness’ of a super-sensuous plane of knowledge and intuition. He feels his existence “Aham Asmi”—“I exist” whereas the Jada Samadhi of a Hatha-Yogi cannot bring in this super-conscious state. It is something like deep sleep. There is no super-sensuous divine knowledge in this state. The breathing stops completely. The Prana is fixed up somewhere in the Muladhara Chakra. Even if you cut his leg, he will not feel any pain. There will be no bleeding. But the Samskaras and Vasanas are not burnt here. Whereas in Brahmic Consciousness, the Vasanas and Samskaras are fried in toto. There is Alambana (support for the mind); there is Triputi (triad—knower, knowable, knowledge). There are subtle Samskaras in Savikalpa Samadhi or lower Samadhi. In Nirvikalpa Samadhi there is neither Alambana nor Triputi nor Samskara. The Jada Samadhi cannot give liberation. One can enter into Jada Samadhi without any moral perfection, whereas cosmic consciousness can never be had without ethical perfection. Note this point very carefully.

Characteristics of Experience

Absolute fearlessness, desirelessness, thoughtlessness, I-lessness, mine-lessness, anger-lessness, Brahmic aura in the face, freedom from Harsha and Soka are some of the signs that indicate that the man has reached the state of super-consciousness. He is also always in a state of perfect bliss. You can never

see anger, depression, cheerlessness, sorrow in his face. You will find elevation, joy and peace in his presence.

Just as a drunken man is not conscious whether he has cloth on his body or not, when it is a state of dropping down in the ground, so also the Yogi who is experiencing supracosmic consciousness is not conscious of his body. A Jivanmukta who is in the fourth Bhumika will have slight consciousness of his body in the form of a Samskara or mental retentum.

Just as a man doubts whether his old rotten shoe is clinging to his feet or not when he is sometimes absent-minded, so also the Jivanmukta doubts whether this body is hanging like an old rotten shoe or not. That Sannyasi or an Avadhoota who fully rests in Brahman and has no idea at all of the slightest difference between a male and a female is entitled to throw off his Kowpeena altogether. That Kowpeena also will drop by itself.

Commonsense Approach

He who is naked should not live in an Ashram or a town or a village. He should roam about unknown not caring for food and cast off his body as a slough in a dung-hill or dilapidated house. So says Narada-Parivrajaka Upanishad.

To live naked in an Ashram and to have all sorts of comforts, to have disciples and to take interest in the development of the Ashram does not look nice. It does not appeal to some sections of people at least. That Sannyasin or Mahatma who wants or keeps something for his body in an Ashram can wear also a small cloth along with his Kowpeena. This will not go against his realisation or Jivanmukti. Physical nudity alone will not constitute real Tyaga. Some persons study the description of a Jnani in the seventh Bhumika in Viveka-Chudamani or Yoga Vasishtha and try to imitate this external state without having any internal development or attainment of that highest state of consciousness. This is a mistake. This is hypocrisy. Some

Sannyasins falsely assume the state of Brahma-Varishtha. They like to be fed by young ladies.

In Uttarakasi in the Himalayas a young man heard the story of Yoga Vasishtha from Swami Deva Giri, wherein there was a description of a Jnani of the seventh state of Jnana. This young man gave up at once food for 15 days, began to pass motions and urine in his room and imagined that he was in the seventh stage of Jnana. An intelligent neighbour applied a plant called Bitchu-Kata to his body which produces severe pain like scorpion-sting. He yelled out like anything and came back to his senses. He went to the Kshetra as usual for taking alms. Is this not hypocrisy? His internal mental state has not reached the highest zenith of Brahmic consciousness. It remained in a raw, crude, unpolished state, though he externally put on the state of a Paramahamsa who dwells in the absolute consciousness.

Appearances Are Questionable

You will find in Kumbha Mela at Haridwar batches of Naga-Sadhus, young boys marching in procession in a nude state. Are these boys Jitendriya Yogins? Is this not hypocrisy? Hypocrisy takes various forms. One should fully understand the subtle ways and workings of the mind. Mind is Maya.

If you take camphor or Hareetaki or Nux Vomica seed for some time, you will lose your power of erection in the generative organ. This does not mean that you are a Jitendriya Yogi. There are some expert old men who give a twist to the spermatic cord and thereby paralyse the nerve erigens that causes erection of the organ. The mind remains in the same state. Passion is the same. Real Sannyasa is internal, mental nudity. The mind is absolutely free from Vasanas and Samskaras. This is the real Avadhoota state.

You cannot find the symptoms and signs of cosmic consciousness in these pseudo-Samadhisths who have shut themselves up in underground rooms. If you take the seeds of

Apamarga (Nayurivi in Tamil) you will be free from hunger and thirst. The use of the Apamarga seeds for destroying hunger and thirst is as follows:—These seeds have seven subtle skins or outer husks. Dry them in the sun and rub them on the hands. Take 18th of a seer of this seed. Make Kheer of this seed with milk and sugar, and drink. Take a purgative to start with. Live on milk for two days. Take an enema also. All old faecal matter should be evacuated. You will have pleasant sensations and feelings of joy. There will be neither hunger nor thirst. There are two varieties of Apamarga seeds. The red one is better.

There is another plant or grass that is obtainable on the way to Kailas. It grows on rocks. You will have to pluck it before sunrise. You can be freed from hunger for six months. The pseudo-Samadhists use these seeds and roots. When they come out of the room they are the same persons with worldly Vasanas and Samskaras. They are talkative and Rajasic.

Ramacharaka's Views on Cosmic Consciousness

Yogi Ramacharaka has written about cosmic consciousness in his book Raja Yoga as follows: "There is a stage still higher than this last mentioned, but it has come to but very few of the race. Reports of it come from all times, races, countries. It has been called "Cosmic Consciousness" and is described as an awareness of the Oneness of Life—that is, a consciousness that the Universe is filled with one Life, an actual perception and "awareness" that the universe is full of life, motion, and mind, and that there is no such thing as Blind Force or Dead Matter, but that all is alive, vibrating and intelligent. That is, of course, that the Real Universe, which is the Essence or Background of the Universe of Matter, Energy and Mind, is as they describe. In fact, the description of those who have had glimpses of this state would indicate that they see the Universe as All-Mind—that all is Mind at the last. This form of consciousness has been experienced by men here and there—only a few in moments of "illumination" the period lasting but a very short space of time, then

fading away, leaving but a memory. In the moment of "illumination" there came to those experiencing it a sense of "in-touch-ness" with Universal knowledge and Life, impossible to describe, accompanied by a joy beyond understanding.

"Regarding this last, "Cosmic Consciousness", we would state that it means more than an intellectual conviction, belief or realisation of the facts as stated, for an actual vision and consciousness of these things came in the moment of illumination. Some others report that they have a deep abiding sense of reality of the facts described by the report of the illumined, but have not experienced the "vision" or ecstasy referred to. These last people seem to have with them always the same mental state as that possessed by those who had the "vision" and passed out of it, carrying with them the remembrance and feeling, but not the actual consciousness attained at the moment. They agree upon the essential particulars of the reports. Dr. Maurice Bucke, now passed out of this plane of life, wrote a book entitled "Cosmic Consciousness" in which he describes a number of these cases, including his own, Walt Whitman's and others' and in which he holds that this stage of consciousness is before the race and will gradually come to it in the future. He holds that the manifestation of it which has come to some few of the race, as above stated, is but the first beams of the sun which are flashing upon us and which are but prophecies of the appearance of the great body of light itself.

"We shall not here consider at length the reports of certain great religious personages of the past, who have left records that in moments of great spiritual exaltation they became conscious of "being in the presence of the Absolute" or perhaps within the radius of the "light of Its countenance." We have great respect for these reports and have every reason for believing many of them as authentic, notwithstanding the conflicting reports that have been handed down to us by those who had these glimpses of consciousness were not prepared or trained to fully understand the nature of the phenomena. They found themselves in

the spiritual presence of something of awful grandeur and spiritual rank and were completely dazed and bewildered at the sight. They did not understand the nature of Absolute and when they had sufficiently recovered they reported that they had been in the "presence of God," the word "God" meaning their particular conception of Deity—that is the one appearing as Deity in their own particular religious creed or school. They saw nothing to cause them to identify this something with their particular conception of Deity, except that they thought that "it must be God" and knowing no other God except their own particular conception, they naturally identified that Something with "God" as they conceived Him to be. And their reports naturally were along these lines.

"Thus the reports of all religions are filled with accounts of the so-called miraculous occurrences. The Catholic saint reports that he "saw the light of God's countenance," and the non-catholic reports likewise regarding God as he knows Him. The Mohammedan reports that he caught a glimpse of the face of Allah and the Buddhist tells us that he saw Buddha under the Tree. The Brahmin has seen the face of Brahman, and the various Hindu sects have men who give similar reports regarding their own particular deities. The Persians have given similar reports and even the ancient Egyptians have left records of similar occurrences. These conflicting reports have led to the belief, on the part of those who did not understand the nature of the phenomenon, that these things were "all imagination" and fancy, if indeed not rank falsehood and imposture. But the Yogins know better than this. They know that underneath all these varying reports there is a common ground of truth, which will be apparent to anyone investigating the matter. They know that all of these reports (except a few based upon fraudulent imitations of the real phenomenon) are based upon truth and are but the bewildered reports of the various observers. They know that these people were temporarily lifted above the ordinary plane of consciousness and were made aware of the existence of a Being or

Beings higher than mortal. It does not follow that they saw "God" or the Absolute, for there are many beings of high spiritual growth and development that would appear to the ordinary mortal as the very God. The Catholic doctrine of Angels and Archangels is corroborated by those among the Yogins who have been "behind the veil" and they give us reports of the "Devas" and other advanced Beings. So the Yogi accepts these reports of the various mystics, saints and inspired ones, and accounts for them all by laws perfectly natural to the students of the Yoga Philosophy, but which appear as supernatural to those who have not studied along these lines.

"But we cannot speak further of this phase of the subject in this lesson, for a full discussion of it would lead us far away from the phase of the general subject before us. But we wish to be understood as saying that there are certain centres in the mental being of man from which may come light regarding the existence of the Absolute and higher order of Beings. In fact, from these centres come to man that part of his mental "feelings" that he calls "the religious instinct or intuition." Man does not arrive at the underlying consciousness of "Something." Beyond the means of his intellect—it is the glimmer of light coming from the higher centres of the Self. He notices these gleams of light, but not understanding them, he proceeds to erect elaborate theological and creedal structures to account for them the work of the intellect, however, always lacking that "feeling" that the intuition itself possesses. True religion, no matter under what name it may masquerade, comes from the "heart" and is not comforted or satisfied with these intellectual explanations, and hence comes that unrest and craving for satisfaction, which comes to man when the light begins to break through. "Miss Laurie Bratt of America writes about an experience in cosmic consciousness in "The Hindu Mind" as follows: "The Hindus have written much on cosmic consciousness but in the West this subject is much less known. However, those who have read Doctor Bucke's 'Cosmic Consciousness' and Edward Carpen-

ter's 'Towards Democracy' know that these authors believe that cosmic consciousness is a natural faculty of man, and that a future race of men on this earth will be born with this faculty well developed and not merely latent as it is now. Bucke's theory is that just as man advanced from the state of simple consciousness, which he shared with the animal kingdom into a state of Self-consciousness peculiar to man alone and marked by the development of language, so he must inevitably come into a higher state of consciousness, distinguished by a cosmic or universal understanding.

"Bucke maintains that the increasing number of people who have attained some degree of cosmic consciousness in the past few centuries is proof that these persons constitute the vanguard or forerunners of the new race. Among those in the West whom Bucke believes to have had the Cosmic sense more or less well developed (in recent centuries) are St. John of the Cross, Francis Bacon, Jacob Behman, Blaise Pascal, Spinoza, Swedenborg, William Wordsworth, Alexander Pushkin, Honore de Balzac, Emerson, Tennyson, Thoreau, Walt Whitman and Edward Carpenter. He also mentions Ramakrishna as a Hindu example.

"Besides these famous men it is doubtless true that many hundreds of men and women in each country, unknown to fame, have been exalted to some degree of cosmic consciousness. There is no doubt in my mind that the message brought to America by Hindu teachers in recent years has been the means by which hundreds and perhaps thousands of Americans have achieved, through the meditation practices taught by them, a glimpse of divine consciousness. Some few students have gone further, and attained very high illumination. Here we have an example of how the cosmic sense is being developed in larger and larger numbers paving the way for the great race of the future."

Bucke's Views

Some passages from Bucke's book is well worth quoting here: "In contact with the flux of Cosmic Consciousness all religions known and named today will be melted down. The human soul will be revolutionised. Religion will absolutely dominate the race. It will not depend on tradition. It will be believed and disbelieved. It will not be a part of life, belonging to certain hours, times and occasions. It will not be in sacred books nor in the mouths of priests. It will not dwell in churches and meetings and forms and days. Its life will not be in prayers, hymns nor in discourses. It will not depend on special revelations, on the words of gods who came down to teach, nor on any Bible or Bibles. It will have no mission to save men from their sins nor to secure them entrance to heaven. It will not teach a future immortality nor future glories, for immortality and all glory exist in the here and now.

"The evidence of immortality will live in every heart as sight in every eye. Doubt of God and of eternal life will be as impossible as is now doubt of existence; the evidence of each will be same. Religion will govern every minute of every day of all life. Churches, priests, forms, creeds, prayers, all agents, all intermediaries between the individual men and God will be permanently replaced by direct unmistakable intercourse. Sin will no longer exist nor will salvation be desired. Men will not worry about death or a future, about the kingdom of heaven, about what may come with and after the cessation of the life of the present body. Each soul will feel and know itself to be immortal, will feel and know that the entire universe with all its good and with all its beauty is for it and belongs to it for ever. The world peopled by men possessing Cosmic Consciousness will be as far removed from the world of today as this from the world as it was before the advent of self-consciousness. This new race is in the act of being born from us and in the near future will occupy and possess the earth."

A Definite Way to Contact God

"The fact that there is a technique such as Yoga practices, whereby Cosmic Consciousness can be attained is in itself proof that this higher sense is indeed an inherent faculty of all men, needing but the necessary training to call it forth. Most people believe that divine knowledge comes to only a few chosen people, and that the average man can approach no nearer to God than his "faith" will take him. Realisation that there is a definite way to contact God, a technique usable by all men in all circumstances, has come with such a liberating shock to students of Hindu spiritual science that they feel they have undergone a new birth.

"I have one such case in mind. An American man who, as soon as he had heard the Yogoda message brought to America by Swami Yogananda of Bengal was swept up into Cosmic Consciousness. This student was possessed of intense religious faith and aspiration. Though well read in the sacred scriptures of the world, especially those of the Hindu, he knew that this intellectual knowledge was barren and stony; it did not feed the soul-hunger within him. He did not wish merely to read about spiritual food, but to taste it. Under the even tenor of his days there yawned a black abyss of despair—despair that he was unworthy of any direct contact with God, since no such experience was given him. He finally came to doubt not God, but the possibility that he would ever be able to have more than an intellectual comprehension of Him. This conviction too struck at the roots of his life and made it seem a worthless and meaningless thing.

"Into this dark night of his soul came the dazzling light brought by the teacher from India. The student felt the heavy weight of despair lifting from his heart. Returning to his home one night from the last of the public lectures, he was conscious of a great peace within himself. He felt that in some deep fundamental way he had become a different person. An impulse

urged him to look into a mirror in his room, that he might see the new man. There he saw not his own face, but the face of the Hindu teacher whose lecture he had attended that evening.

“The flood-gate of joy broke in his soul; he was inundated with waves of indescribable ecstasy. Words that had been merely words to him before—bliss, immortality, eternity, truth, divine love—became, in the twinkling of an eye, the core of being, the essence of his life, the only possible reality. Realisation that these deep, everlasting founts of joy existed in every heart, that this immortal life underlay all the mortality of humanity, that this eternal, all-inclusive love enveloped and supported and guided every particle, every atom of creation, burst upon him with a surety and divine certainty that caused his whole being to pour forth in a flood of praise and gratitude.

“He knew not with his mind alone, but with his heart and soul, with every cell and molecule of his body. The sublime splendour and joy of this discovery were so vast that he felt that centuries, millenniums, countless aeons of suffering were as nothing, as less than nothing, if by such means that bliss could be obtained. Sin, sorrow, death—these were but words now, words without meaning, words swallowed up by joy as minnows by the seven seas.

Physiological Changes

“He was aware, during this first period of illumination and during the months which followed of a number of physiological changes within himself. The most striking was what seemed of an arrangement of molecular structure in his brain or the opening up of new cell-territory there. Ceaselessly, day and night, he was conscious of this work going on. It seemed as though a kind of electrical drill was boring out new cellular thought-channels. This phenomenon is strong proof of Bucke’s theory that Cosmic Consciousness is a natural faculty of man for it gives evidence that the brain-cells which are connected with this faculty

are already present in man, although inactive or non-functioning in the majority of human beings at the present time.

"Another important change was felt in his spinal column. The whole spine seemed turned into iron for several months, so that, when he sat to meditate on God, he felt anchored for ever, able to sit in one place eternally without motion or consciousness of any bodily function. At times an influx of superhuman strength invaded him and he felt that he was carrying the whole universe on his shoulders. The elixir of life, the nectar of immortality, he felt flowing in his veins as an actual, tangible force. It seemed like a quicksilver or a sort of electrical fluid light throughout his body.

The Everlasting Aims

"During the months of his illumination, he felt no need of food or sleep. But he conformed his outward life to the pattern of his household and ate and slept when his family did. All food seemed pure spirit to him, and in sleep he was pillow'd on the "Everlasting arms" awakening to a joy past all words, past all powers to description.

"He had previously suffered from heavy colds and had been a constant smoker; now his body was purged of all sickness, and desire for cigarette was wiped completely from his consciousness. His family and friends were aware of a great change in his appearance and manner; his face shone with a radiant light; his eyes were pools of joy. Strangers spoke to him irresistibly drawn by a strange sympathy; on the street-car, children would come over to sit on his lap, asking him to visit them.

"The whole Universe was to him bathed in a sea of love. He said to himself many times: "Now at last I know what Love is! This is God's love, love, unconquerable love, all-satisfying love." He knew beyond all possibility or thought of doubt that love creates and sustains the universe, and that all created things

human or subhuman were destined to discover this Love, this immortal bliss that is the very essence of life. He felt his mind expand, his understanding reach out, endlessly widening, growing, touching every thing in the Universe, binding all things, all thought to himself. He was "centre everywhere, circumference nowhere."

"The air that he breathed was friendly, intimate, conscious of life. He felt all the world was "home" to him, that he could never feel strange or alien to any place again; that the mountains, the seas, the distant lands which he had never seen, would be as much his own as the home of his boyhood. Everywhere he looked, he saw the "atom dance" of nature; the air was filled with myriad moving pinpricks of light.

"During these months, he went about his daily duties as usual but with a hitherto unknown efficiency and speed. He was a student at college during this period, and passed all his examinations without looking at a textbook. His mind was bathed in a sea of knowledge. Typed papers flew off his machine, complete without error in a fourth of his customary time. Fatigue was unknown to him; his work seemed like child's play, happy and carefree. Conversing in person or over the telephone on any business, his inward joy covered every action and circumstance with a cosmic significance; for to him, this telephone, this table, this voice was God, God manifesting Himself in another of His fascinating disguises.

"In the midst of his work, he would suddenly be freshly overwhelmed by the goodness of God who has given him this incredible, unspeakable happiness. His breath would stop completely at such times; the awe which he felt would be accompanied by an absolute stillness within and without. Time and space were swallowed up, gone without trace like all unreality. Underlying all his consciousness was a sense of immeasurable and unutterable gratitude; a longing for others to know the joy which lay within them; but most of all, a divine knowledge, past

all human comprehension, that all was well with the world, that everything was leading to the goal of Cosmic Consciousness, immortal bliss.

"One can well imagine, with Doctor Bucke that a race of men possessing, as a normal and permanent faculty, this sense of Cosmic Consciousness would soon turn the earth into a Paradise, a planet fit for Christs and Buddhas, and a pole star for the wheeling universe."

In the Upanishads he who has experience in Cosmic Consciousness is called "Sarvavid" i.e., one who knows everything in detail.

May we all attain the state of Cosmic Consciousness, our birthright, centre, ideal and goal. Here is an inexhaustible spiritual wealth. Here is a spiritual treasure which no dacoits can plunder. The unemployment is solved now. The miseries of the world are removed now. You will have a glorious and brilliant life which is ineffable. You will have neither wants nor desires, neither torments nor anxieties, neither worries, nor fear. You will attain immortality and everlasting bliss. Drink the nectar of immortality and attain the everlasting abode of peace and Immortality which was attained by Tukaram, Tulasidas, Ramdas, Mira, Kabir, Prahlada and Dhruva of yore.

May the fire of devotion grow brighter in you all. May Lord Krishna bestow on you spiritual strength to control the Indriyas and the restless mind! May the blessings of Bhagavatas be upon you.

Non-dual Consciousness

Today I will talk to you on Non-dual Consciousness. This is the consciousness of Suddha-Satchidananda Para Brahman. It is above Cosmic Consciousness. Arjuna had Cosmic Consciousness. Hiranyagarbha has Cosmic Consciousness. But this Non-dual Consciousness is above Cosmic Consciousness. It is Nirvikalpa Samadhi of Vedantins. It is Asamprajnata Samadhi

of Raja Yogins. In this Samadhi there is no Triputi, the triad, seer-sight-seen, knower-knowledge-knowable, meditator-meditation-meditated or the object of meditation. There is nothing here. There is no Triputi. It is Christ Consciousness. There are no names and forms. There is no sound or colour. There is neither matter nor energy. It is pure Absolute Consciousness, consciousness per se. Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God is within you." The Kingdom of God is not a place, but a state of consciousness. It is the Non-dual Consciousness, wherein the mind, senses and the intellect cease functioning. It is the realm of intuition.

In deep sleep also there are no names and forms. It is like a glimpse of the Non-dual Consciousness, but there is ignorance, Avidya, Karana Sarira, Anandamaya Kosha.

In Vedanta, there are two kinds of Samadhis,—Advaita Bhavanarupa Samadhi and Advaita Avastharupa Samadhi. The aspirant meditates on the formula 'Aham Brahmasmi' or 'Tattvamasi', the great Maha Vakyas of the Upanishads. In the beginning stage it is called Advaita Bhavanarupa stage. He tries to identify himself with the Non-dual Consciousness, but later on through deep meditation and constant Nididhyasana when he is established in his own Satchidanandasvarupa, it is called Advaita Avastharupa Samadhi. He is fully established in Non-dual Consciousness. There are no names and forms, matter and energy. The thing-in-itself, the Transcendent, alone remains. Sri Sankara and Dattatreya had this experience. Madalasa had this experience. She sang the song "Suddhosī, Buddhosī, Nirājanosī, Samsara Maya Parivarjitosī" to her children in the cradle and made them Jivanmuktas, Liberated Sages. 'Suddhosī'—You are pure, O children. 'Buddhosī'—You are full of knowledge, 'Nirājanosī'—You are spotless,—no lust, no greed, no Asubha Vasanas. 'Samsaramaya-parivarjitosī'—not touched by Maya. This Maya cannot touch you, Avidya cannot touch you. You are pure, eternal, immortal Atman. Yajnavalkya had this experi-

ence. Vamadeva had this experience. Even when he was dwelling in the womb of his mother, he attained Illumination. Chudalai had this experience. She was a sage and Yogi. She had powers. She walked in the sky and appeared before her husband. She stood above the ground and taught him Brahma Vidya. Sulabha also was a sage and Jnani. She approached Janaka and entered his body through her Yogic power. He did not like Dandi Swamis. She was a Dandi Swami. She wanted to teach him a lesson. Through her Yogic power she entered in his astral body, and he charged that Sulabha, as a Sannyasini, should not have entered the body of a male. She taught him a lesson: "You still have the consciousness of sex, male and female. You have not attained the highest illumination." Uddalaka had this experience of Non-dual consciousness. He taught his disciple Swetaketu in different ways, the knowledge of Brahman. Ashtavakra was a great sage of illumination. He has written Ashtavakra Gita, which is soul-elevating. It raises you to the supreme height of Brahmic splendour. Vyasa, Vasishtha, Sukadeva, Gowdapada, Govindapada, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara, Sanatsujata, Hastamalaka, Padmapada, Trotakacharya, Sureshwaracharya, Pattinattar, Appayya Deekshitar, Neelakantha Deekshitar, Sankarananda, Vidyaranya, Sadasiva Brahmendra, Jada Bharata, Akalkot Swami,—all of them had the experience of Non-dual consciousness.

There are various kinds of Vakyas given in the Upanishads: "Prajnanam Brahma", "Aham Brahmasmi", "Tattvamasi", "Ayamatma Brahma". The first is Lakshanabodha Vakya of Brahman. What is this Brahman!

It is pure consciousness. Then comes "Tattvamasi" Upadesavakya. The teacher instructs the student, "Thou art That." "You are not the body and mind. You are beyond Avidya and all illusory names and forms. If you sublate Avidya and Maya, remove evil Vrittis and give up body-identification, you rest in your own Svaroopa." Then the student begins to meditate

on ‘Aham Brahmasmi’ formula. This is Anusandana Vakya. Then comes “Ayamatma Brahma”—This Atman is identical with Para Brahman. This is Anubhava Vakya.

There is another kind of Vakya in the Upanishad. It is called Avantara Vakya. In the plantain tree before you get the fruits, you utilise the leaves, the stem and the flower. This is called ‘Avantara’—“in the interval”, before you get the fruits, you utilise the leaves, flower and the stem. Even so before you attain the fullest Illumination, you meditate on “Satchidananda,” “Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma.” Brahman is “Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute” “Satyam”—truth, “Jnanam”—wisdom, “Anantam”—infinity.

Then there are Abhedabodha Vakyas, the great sentences which treat of the identity of the individual soul and the Supreme Soul. Dattatreya says in his Avadhoota Gita, “*Vedantasarasarvaswam Jnanam Vijnanameva cha, Ahamatma Nirakarah Sarvavyapee Swabhavatah*”—“I am the all-pervading, formless Self. This is the essence of Vedanta”. “*Ahamatma Nirakara Sarvavyapee Swabhavatah*”—you can meditate on this formula. There are various Abhedabodha Vakyas and each aspirant may like one formula or another.

Bhooma, Sadasiva, Chaitanya. Chaitanya is that which knows itself and knows others also. Jada is that which does not know itself and knows not others also. “Aham Sakshi”—I am the silent witness of the mind, intellect and the senses. “Avasthatrayasakshi”—I am the witness of the three states. This is another beautiful formula. “Sivoham, Sivoham, Sivah Kevaloham.” “Siva” here means Para Brahman only, and not the Siva with trident. “Soham”—“I am He.” This is another beautiful formula. “I am He, He is I”—“Hamsah Soham, Soham Hamsah.” There is greater force when we repeat a formula both in its original order and in its reverse order, just as “God is Love, Love is God”, “God is Truth, Truth is God.” There was a

sage, a contemporary of Sri Ramana Maharshi,—Seshadriswami. He liked this formula. “Hamsah Soham, Soham Hamsah”.

I sing the formula:

*“Sivoham, Sivoham, Sivoham, Soham,
Sat-Chit-Ananda Svaroopoham.”*

This is a very beautiful formula. Any formula you can select for constant Nididhyasana and meditation. “Sat-Chit-Ananda” is a prop for the mind to lean upon.

There are four fundamental vital verses in the Avadhoota Gita of Dattatreya. He gives in it his own experience. It will be very useful for Vedantic students to meditate on those formulae. These verses are:

*Janma mrityurna te chittam bandhamokshau subhasubhau
Katham rodishi re vatsa namarupam na te na me.*

Why do you weep, my child? There are no names and forms in you. There is neither bondage nor liberation, neither good nor evil. Stand up. Gird up your loins. Fight with the mind and the senses and rest in your own Satchidananda Swaroopa. There are no names and forms. The world is not in you. It is only a Sankalpa.

*Ahamevavyayonantah suddhavijnana vigrahah,
Sukham duhkham na janami katham kasyapi vartate.*

I am Avyaya—imperishable, Ananta—infinite, Suddha Vijnana Vigraha—a mass of pure consciousness, Prajnana Ghana, Ananda Ghana. A mountain is not so solid as the mass of knowledge. The physical mountain appears as solid, but his wisdom, knowledge of Atman, is more solid, huge, than the Himalayas. So it is called Prajnanaghana, Anandaghana, Vijnanaghana, Chidghana. I do not know what is pleasure and what is pain.

*Na manasam karma subhasubham me
 Na vachikam karma subhasubham me
 Na kayikam karma subhasubham me
 Jnanamritam suddhamateendriyoham.*

Meditate on this third verse. You will free youself from the bondage of Karmas. The mental actions are not in you. The actions of the body are not in you. The actions of speech are not in you. Purity, Nectar, beyond the reach of the senses—this is your divine, essential, Brahmic nature.

Then he denies the whole world. He who is established in his own Svaroopa, to him the names and forms and the world vanish.

*Mahadaadi jagatsarvam na kinchit pratibhati me,
 Brahmaiva kevalam sarvam katham varnaashramasthitih.*

Mahat is the first manifestation of the Absolute. Then sprang up the mind, the senses, the Tanmatras, the five elements. The quintuplication of the elements gave rise to the world. Where is Varna, where are the Ashramas, the four kinds of orders? Everything is Brahman. There is no world. This is the highest experience of a sage or a Jnani.

Therefore, let us try to enter into this Non-dual Consciousness through equipping ourselves with the four means of salvation, by hearing the Srutis, reflection and meditation. Let us practise constant Nididhyasana and meditation on these formulae and attain the state of Jeevanmukti and highest Illumination and rest in our Swaroopa and radiate joy and peace and bliss to all those who come in contact with us, and radiate peace and joy and bliss to the different corners of the whole world.

Chapter Three

EXPERIENCES IN MEDITATION

Common Experiences in Meditation

In the beginning of meditation, lights of various colours, such as red, white, blue, green, a mixture of red and green light, etc., appear in the forehead. They are Tanmatric lights. Every Tattva has its own hue. Prithvi Tattva has yellow colour. Apastattva has white colour. Agni has red colour. Vayu has green colour. Akasa has blue colour. The coloured lights are due to these Tattvas.

Sometimes a big sun or moon, or lightning-like flashes appear in front of the forehead during meditation. Do not mind these appearances. Shun them. Try to dive deep into the source of these lights.

Sometimes Devas, Rishis, Nitya Siddhas will appear in meditation. Receive them with honour. Bow to them. Get advice from them. They appear before you to help and give you encouragement.

In the beginning of meditation and concentration you will see in the centre of the forehead a resplendent flashing light. This will last for half or one minute and then disappear. The light will flash either from above or sideways. Sometimes a sun of 6 inches or 8 inches in diameter with or without rays will be seen. You will see the form of your Guru or Upasya Murti also.

When you get glimpses of the Self, when you see the blazing light, when you get some other extraordinary spiritual experiences, do not fall back in terror. Do not give up the Sadhana. Do not mistake them for a phantom. Be brave. March boldly with joy.

During meditation you will have no idea of time. You will not hear any sounds. You will have no idea of environments. You will forget your name and all sorts of relationship with others. You will enjoy peace and bliss. Gradually you will rest in Samadhi.

In the beginning, one remains in a state of bliss for sometime. He comes down. By constant practice of incessant meditation, he continues to remain in that exalted state for ever. Later on, the body-idea completely vanishes.

When you enter into deep meditation, you will have no consciousness of your body or surroundings. You will have equanimity of mind. You will not hear any sounds. There will be stoppage of up-going and down-going sensations. The consciousness of egoism will also gradually vanish. You will experience inexplicable joy and indescribable happiness. Gradually reasoning and reflection also will cease.

When you enter the silence through deep meditation, the world outside and all your troubles will drop away. You will enjoy supreme peace. In this silence is the supreme Light of lights. In this silence is undecaying bliss. In this silence is real strength and joy.

When you practise rigorous meditation, Kevala Kumbhaka or natural retention of breath without Puraka (inhalation) and Rechaka (exhalation) will come by itself. When Kevala Kumbhaka comes, you will enjoy immense peace and you will have one-pointed mind.

The visions of Rishis concerning the soul and such other transcendental matters, manifest themselves to one who is devoted to constant duties prescribed by the Srutis and the Smritis, who is unselfish and who seeks to know the supreme Brahman.

During deep meditation one forgets the external world and then the body.

The feeling of rising up during meditation is a sign that indicates that you are going above body-consciousness. You will

feel a peculiar Ananda or bliss also when you experience this feeling. In the beginning this feeling of rising up will last for a minute only. After a minute you will feel that you have come back to normal consciousness again.

You will enjoy a sort of higher type of indescribable peace during your meditation. But it will take a long time to get real spiritual experience or merge the mind in your Lakshya or chosen object of meditation or get over body-consciousness completely. Be patient. Persevere. You will be successful.

During meditation the mind becomes calm, serene and steady. The various rays of the mind are collected and focussed in the object of meditation. The mind is centred on the Lakshya. There will be no tossing of the mind. One idea occupies the mind. The whole energy of the mind is concentrated on that one idea. The senses become still. They do not function. Where there is deep concentration, there is no consciousness of the body and surroundings. He who has good concentration can visualise the picture of the Lord very clearly within the twinkling of the eye.

When your meditation becomes deep you will lose consciousness of the body. You will feel that there is no body. You will experience immense joy. There will be mental consciousness. Some lose sensation in the legs, then in the spinal column, in the trunk and the hands. When the sensation is lost in these parts, they feel that the head is suspended in the air. The mind may try to run back in the body.

During meditation you will see small pinpoints of light. These will begin to grow and will become as big as the sun if you continue your practice. You will behold luminous divine forms of Sri Krishna, Vishnu, Lakshmi, Kaali, Ganesha, Rama and others. You will see beautiful scenes of gardens and buildings. When you repeat the Gayatri Mantra or any other Mantra you will feel a spiritual current going to the anus region or Muladhara Chakra. Then the currrents will go to the head also.

You will feel great joy. Your heart will be filled with intense love. You will feel that a powerful spiritual current is going up along the spine during meditation.

You will feel that power is radiating from you. Your consciousness will be deeper now. Thoughts of God will start the spiritual currents in the body. Do not check these currents. If heat is produced in the head, apply butter, Amalaka or Brahmi oil. Take cold bath three times during summer. Take butter and sugar-candy.

Sometimes you will feel the presence of your Ishtam near you. The image will begin to appear as living when you practise regular meditation. While meditating with closed eyes on the image placed in your heart, you will find that the image is becoming more and more luminous. Even with open eyes you will see a bright sun or moon. You will see lights of different colours.

You will experience a great upward pull on the anus and the lower end of the spine. Sometimes you will feel great tingling sensation at the lower end of the spine. You will feel as though some great change in your system will happen soon.

In dream you will feel that you are trying to come out of your body. You will feel great pressure at the end of the spine.

When you meditate with closed eyes, you will see in your body two luminous strings in which are placed luminous lotuses at intervals and the strings passed through the image of your Ishtam seated in one of these lotuses in the region of the heart.

The entrance into the higher meditative life depends on the grace of God.

The higher meditative life demands tremendous humility, serenity and courage.

In higher meditative life the senses and the mind are completely subdued. There is no more use of the mind, emotions and imaginations.

The Yogi withdraws himself completely in higher meditation and enters into the state of consciousness above the mind and intellect. He is conscious only of pure being.

In Samadhi or the supreconscious state the Yogi abandons the sense of his own being and enters only into the Being of God.

Spiritual experience will come to you when you are ready, but not before.

There is inner unfolding from level to level in your spiritual experience. Wait patiently. Plod on in your Sadhana with purity and courage.

Like draws like in your spiritual journey. You are never really left alone. You will get help from Yogins and Saints internally, from different parts of the worlds. Their spiritual vibrations will elevate and inspire you.

Meditate and enter into the realm of radiant light. There are no limitations here. There is no worry. There are no obstacles here. There is no time or space. In this holy realm there is no fear, no doubt, no indecision. It is all eternal joy, bliss, peace and happiness.

Continue your meditation. You will feel that your anus and a spot on the top of the head are connected by these strings. You may feel that you will lose your physical consciousness. Be not afraid. Be bold and courageous. You will have rare spiritual experience. You will have cosmic vision. Do not open your eyes now. You will come back to normal consciousness.

Pure emotions will rise in your heart. You will begin to love every creature. You will feel that the whole world is nothing, but pure consciousness. The tables, chairs, men, women and other things will all appear to contain this consciousness, just as vessels contain their contents. You will feel that all things are made of this consciousness. This rare experience will give you great bliss. You will feel that the Lord is sporting in all

things as this pure consciousness. You will actually lose the sense of material nature of things around you.

You will have Sakara realisation and Bhava Samadhi at the Anahata Chakra. You will experience Nirvikalpa Samadhi at Sahasrara.

May you all attain the exalted state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi through regular and constant meditation.

Various Kinds of Vision in Meditation

Visions and experiences come and go. They are not in themselves the culminating point in the Sadhana. He who attaches much importance to these small visions does not march swiftly on the path. Therefore abandon the idea of these experiences. The final experience, intuitional and direct, of the Supreme alone is the true one.

Rise above the visions. The vision that you see in meditation is a hindrance on the path to Samadhi or God-realisation. When you see them, the mind will be fixed on these visions throughout the day instead of on God. Avoid these visions and the thoughts of them. Be indifferent. Substitute the thought of the Lord.

At times you will see some lustrous forms of Devatas or some other physical forms. You will see your Ishta-Devata or your Guru, Siddhas, Rishis and others give their Darshan to encourage you. You can see beautiful gardens, palatial buildings, rivers, mountains, golden temples, sceneries so lovely and picturesque as cannot be adequately described.

During intense concentration, many are able to feel certain peculiar sensations as if some electric current passed from the Muladhara Chakra. They immediately disturb their body and come down to the physical consciousness out of fear. They need have no fear at all. They should keep steady and wait for further experience.

Experiences vary in different individuals. The experience of one man may not be the same as that of another man. Many erroneously believe that they have realised the Self when they get these experiences, stop their Sadhana and try to move with the public to preach and do Lokasangraha. This is a serious blunder. This is not realisation at all. These are all simple encouragements from your Ishta Devata to convince you of a higher spiritual life and push you in your systematic and incessant practice with zeal and enthusiasm. You will have to ignore these things and drive them away just as you did with worldly objects. You must not care a bit when you get these visions. You must have your Lakshya or the goal. The visions may appear in some persons within a few days, while others within six or nine months. It depends upon the state of the mind and degree of concentration. Some persons may not have such experience, but they will be progressing in the spiritual path.

Visions are either subjective or objective, your own mental creations or of realities on finer planes of matter. Universe consists of planes of matter of various degrees of density. Rhythmic vibrations of Tanmatras in various degrees give rise to the formation of various planes. Visions may be of these things or beings. Or in many cases they may be purely imaginary. They may be the crystallisation of your own intense thinking. You must discriminate well.

You will sometimes see a vast bright golden light. Within the light you will see your Ishta Devata in front. Sometimes you will see yourself within the light. You will see a golden-coloured light all around.

You may see your Ishta Devata as big as a mountain shining like the sun. You may see the figure during eating, drinking and working. When you enjoy the bliss of this vision, you will experience no taste for food while eating. You will simply swallow the food. You will hear continuous ringing of the Veena. You may see the blazing light of the sun.

The object of your meditation will come before you much quicker if you practise regular meditation. You will feel as if you are covered by the object on which you meditate. You will see as if the whole space is illumined. Sometimes you will experience the sound of ringing bells. You will feel the inner peace of the Soul.

When you get these experiences, when you behold these visions, you will feel peculiar, indescribable bliss. Do not get false contentment. Do not stop your Sadhana. Do not attach much importance to these visions. You have attained only the first degree of concentration. The highest goal or realisation is profound Silence or Supreme Peace, wherein all thoughts cease and you become identical with the Supreme Self.

The beings and objects with whom you are in touch during the early period of meditation belong to the astral world. They are similar to human beings minus a physical overcoat. They have desires, cravings, love, hatred, etc., just as human beings have. They have fine bodies. They can move about freely. They have powers of materialisation, dematerialisation, multiplying, clairvoyant vision of an inferior order. The lustrous forms are higher Devatas of mental or higher planes, who come down to give you Darshan, and encourage you. Various Saktis manifest in lustrous forms. Adore them. Worship them. Do mental Pooja as soon as they give you Darshan. Angels are beings of mental or higher planes. They also appear before your mind's eye.

Sometimes, you will feel an invisible help, possibly from your Ishta Devata when you are actually pushed from the physical body into the new plane. That invisible power assists in your separating from the body and going above body-consciousness. You will have to mark carefully all these operations.

Don't waste your time in looking at these visions. This is only a curiosity. These are all encouragements to convince you of the existence of superphysical, metaphysical realities and the

solid existence of Brahman. Fix yourself on the Goal—Lakshya. Advance. Proceed seriously and energetically.

Sometimes, during meditation, you will see an infinite blue sky, ethereal space. You will see your self in the blue space as a black dot. Your form will appear in the centre of the higher vibratory, rotating particles in the light. You will see physical forms, human forms, children, women, adult males, Rishis with beards, Siddhas and lustrous, Tejomaya forms also.

During meditation you will have no body-consciousness. Even if there be body-consciousness, it will be in the form of a mental retentum. A drunkard may not have full consciousness that he has a cloth round his body. He may feel that something is loosely hanging from his body. Even so, you will have a feeling of the body. You will feel that something is sticking to you like a loose cloth or loose shoes.

The aspirant during meditation will see balls of white-coloured lights, sun, stars. He will experience divine taste and divine fragrance. He may have visions of the Lord in human form—as an old man, a leper, an outcast in rags. He may have vision of the Guru, of sages and saints.

Psychic powers have no proper place in spiritual life. You will have to shun them ruthlessly even if they manifest during the course of your spiritual practices. Siddhis roll under the feet of that Yogic student who has controlled the senses and who practises concentration. The Siddhis are hindrances to realisation.

High spiritual experiences have nothing to do with colours or sounds. There should be inner joy, peace and poise. There should be balance of mind in success and failure, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour. Attraction and repulsion should vanish. There should be cosmic love. The whole world should become the manifestation of the Lord. There should be freedom from all kinds of fears and pains. This is the real nature of high spiritual experiences.

Experience of Jerks

In the beginning of your practice, you may get jerks of hands, legs, trunks and whole body. Sometimes the jerk is very terrible. Do not be afraid. Do not be troubled. It is nothing. It can do nothing. It is due to sudden muscular contraction from new Pranic influence, new nerve-stimuli. Remember that new nerve-currents are formed now owing to the purification of Nadis from Sadhana. The jerks will pass off after some time. At times there is tremor of the body during meditation. This is due to the Prana being taken up to the brain in the process of meditation from the trunk, etc. Do not be afraid. Do not stop the meditation. You will have to pass through all these stages. When you get these, you are improving. You are progressing. Plod on and persevere. Be cheerful. Help is from within, from the Antaryamin, from the Sakshi, from Kutastha-Pratyag-Atman. These are all new sensations. During meditation some people draw inspiration and compose beautiful poems. Record them, if you get this poetic inspiration.

The sudden jerks in meditation come especially when the Prana becomes slow and the outward vibrations make the mind come down from its union with the Lord to the level of physical consciousness.

The mind becomes very subtle by the practice of meditation and thinking also gets developed.

Lights in Meditation

Various kinds of lights manifest during meditation owing to concentration. In the beginning, a bright white light, the size of a pin's point will appear in the forehead in the Trikuti, the space between the two eyebrows, which corresponds tentatively to the Ajna Chakra of the astral body. You will notice, when the eyes are closed, different coloured lights, flashes like lightning, like fire, burning charcoal, fire-flies, moon, sun,

stars. These lights appear in the mental space, Chidakasa. These are all Tanmatric lights. Each Tanmatra has its own specific colour.

Yellow and white lights are commonly seen. Red and blue lights are very rarely noticeable. Frequently there is a combination of white and yellow lights. In the beginning, small balls of white light float about before the mind's eye. When you first observe this, be assured that the mind is becoming more steady and that you are progressing in concentration. After some months, the size of the light will increase and you will see a full blaze of white light, bigger than the sun. In the beginning, these lights are not steady. They come and disappear immediately. They flash out from above the forehead and from the sides. They cause peculiar sensations of extreme joy, and happiness and there is an intense desire for a vision of these lights. When you have steady and systematic practice of two to three hours in the morning and two or three hours at night, these lights appear more frequently and remain steadily for a long time. The vision of the lights is a great encouragement in Sadhana. It impels you to stick steadily to meditation. It gives you strong faith also in superphysical matters. The appearance of the light denotes that you are transcending the physical consciousness. You are in a semi-conscious state when the light appears. You are between two planes. You must not shake the body when these lights appear. You must be perfectly steady in the Asana. You must breathe very, very slowly.

Triangle Light in the Face

One whose food is moderate, whose anger has been controlled, who has given up all love for society, who has subdued his passion, who has overcome all pairs (heat and cold), who has given up his egoism, who does not bless anyone nor takes anything from others—such a man during meditation obtains three (the triangle) in the face.

Light From Sushumna

Sometimes during meditation you will see a brilliant dazzling light. You will find it difficult to gaze on this light. You will be compelled to withdraw your mental vision of this light. This dazzling light is the light emanating from the Sushumna in the heart.

Forms in the Lights

You will see two kinds of forms (1) lustrous forms of Devatas, (2) physical forms. You will see your Ishta Devata or tutelary deity (guiding Devata) in handsome dress and with various, valuable ornaments, flowers, garlands, and with four hands and weapons. Siddhas, Rishis, etc., appear to encourage you. You will find a huge collection of Devatas and celestial ladies with various musical instruments in their hands. You will see beautiful flower-gardens, fine palatial buildings, rivers, mountains, golden temples, sceneries so lovely and picturesque as cannot be adequately described.

Dazzling Light

Sometimes, during meditation, you will get very powerful dazzling lights, bigger than the sun. They are white. In the beginning, they come and fade away quickly. Later on, they are steady, they become fixed for 10, 15 minutes or half an hour according to the strength and degree of concentration. For those who concentrate on the Trikuti, the space between the two eyebrows, the light appears in the forehead in the Trikuti, while for others who concentrate on the top of the head, Sahasrara Chakra, the light manifests on the top of the head. The light is so powerful and dazzling sometimes, that you have to withdraw yourself from looking inward and break the meditation. Some people are afraid and do not know what to do, how to proceed further. They came to me for instructions. I told them that it is a

new sensation, which they have not hitherto experienced. By constant practice, the mind engaged in concentration will be used to it, and the fear will vanish. I asked them to go on with the practice. Some people concentrate on the heart, some on Trikuti and some on the top of the head. It is a question of personal taste. It is easy to control mind by concentrating on the Trikuti.

Anahata Sounds

Anahata sounds (or the melody) are the mystic sounds heard by the Yogi at the beginning of his cycle of meditation. This subject is termed Nada-Anusandhana or an enquiry into the mystic sounds. This is a sign of purification of the Nadis or astral currents, due to Pranayama. The Anahata sound is also called Omkara Dhwani. It is due to the vibration of Prana in the heart.

The Divine Anahata Sabda is ever present within every living being. Patient practice will enable the Yogi to listen to this Inner Voice. This is generally done by sitting in a comfortable Asana and at the end of some Kirtan, Japa and meditation upon the Lord's form, when the mind is thus tuned to the Infinite and all other disturbing waves of thoughts upon the objective world outside are stilled, the Sadhaka closes his ears with his thumbs and with closed eyes diverts his entire attention to his heart and listens—poised in extreme alert awareness. Here, listening does not mean an attempt to hear a sound by an instrument other than itself.

Success is assured when concentration is sufficient. A pure mind and intellect alone gains concentration. The purification of mind and intellect is achieved through regular and daily Kirtan, Japa and Dhyana, Satsanga and Nishkama Karma.

Ten Kinds of Sounds

Nada that is heard is of 10 kinds. The first is Chini (like the sound of the word *chini*); the second is *chini-chini*, the third is the sound of bell; the fourth is that of conch; the fifth is that of Tantri (lute); the sixth is that sound of Tala (cymbals); the seventh is that of flute; the eighth is that of Bheri (drum); the ninth is that of Mridanga (double drum); and the tenth is that of clouds, viz., thunder.

Before thou settest thy foot upon the ladder's upper rung, the ladder of the mystic sounds, thou hast to hear the voice of thy inner God (Highest Self) in 7 manners. The first is like the nightingale's sweet voice chanting a song of parting to its mate. The second comes as the sound of a silver cymbal of the Dhyanins, awakening the twinkling stars. The next is as the plaint melody of the ocean-sprite imprisoned in its shell. And this is followed by the chant of Veena. The fifth sound of bamboo-flute shrills in thine ear. It changes next into a trumpet blast. The last vibrates like the dull rumbling of a thunder-cloud. The seventh swallows all the other sounds. They die and then are heard no more.

Feeling of Separation from Body and Other Experiences

During the course of practice, one day you will feel that you have separated yourself from the body. You will have immense joy mixed with fear, joy in the possession of a new, light, astral body; fear owing to the entry in a foreign, unknown plane. At the very outset, the new consciousness is very rudimentary in the new plane, just as in the case of a pup with newly opened eyes on the eighth or tenth day on the physical plane. You will only feel that you have a light airy body and will perceive a rotating, vibratory limited astral atmosphere with illumination of golden lights, objects, beings, etc. You may feel you are rotat-

ing or floating in the air and consequently there is the fear of being fallen.

You will never fall; but the new experience of subtlety generates novel feeling and sensations in the beginning. How you leave the body, remains unknown at the outset. You are suddenly startled when you have completely separated, and when you enter into the new plane sometimes with blue-coloured sphere around, sometimes with partial illumination (Prakasha) mixed with darkness while at other times with extremely brilliant golden, yellow diffused illumination. The new joy is inexpressible and indescribable in words. You will have to actually feel and experience yourself (Anubhava). You are unaware of how you have left the body, but you are fully conscious of your returning. You gently feel as if you glide on a very very smooth surface; as if you enter smoothly, gently through a small hole or fine tube with an airy light body. You have an airy ethereal feeling. Just as air enters through the crevices of a window, you enter with the new astral body into the physical body. When you have returned, you can markedly differentiate the life in the gross and subtle planes. There is intense craving to regain the new consciousness and to remain in that state always. You are not able to stay for a period longer than 3, 5 or 10 minutes in the new region. Further, you can hardly leave the body at will, through simple willing, in the beginning. By chance, through efforts, you are able to separate from the body once a month in the course of Sadhana. If you plod on with patience, perseverance, and firmness you will be able to leave the body at will and stay for a longer time in the new plane with the new subtle body. You are quite safe from identification with the body. You have made conquest of Deha Adhyasa, only if you can leave the body at will and only if you are able to stay in the new region for 2 or 3 hours. Your position is quite secure then and not otherwise. Mauna or the vow of silence, and solitude or living alone are sine qua non to achieve this.

Astral Journey

You can simply by mere willing travel to any place you like with the body (astral travel, astral journey) and there materialise by drawing the necessary materials either from Asmita (Ahankara) or the universal store-house—ocean of Tanmatras. The process is very simple to Yogins who know the rationale, the detailed technique of the various operations.

Materialisation

You first separate yourself from the body, then you identify yourself with the mind and then, you function on the mental plane with this fine body, just as you do on this earth plane. Through concentration, you rise above body-consciousness; through meditation, you rise above mind and finally through Samadhi, you become one with Brahman.

Mind Moves

After a short practice of meditation, you will feel that the body gets lighter in a short time, say 15 or 30 minutes after you have taken your seat on Padma, Siddha or Sukhasana according to taste and temperament. You may be semi-conscious of the body also. There is great deal of happiness owing to concentration. This is happiness resulting from concentration—concentration-Ananda—which is quite different from sensual pleasures. You must be able to differentiate these two pleasures through Buddhi, rendered subtle by constant Abhyasa, meditation.

You can distinctly feel that the mind is moving, that it is leaving its seat on the brain and that it is trying to go to its Yathasthana, original state. You know that it has left its old groove and now passing in the new groove in the avenue. As a result of meditation, new channels are formed in the brain, new thought-currents are generated, new brain-cells are formed. There is a transformed psychology altogether. You have got a

new brain, a new heart, new feelings, new sentiments, new sensations.

Bhuta Ganas

Sometimes, these elementals appear during meditation. They are strange figures some with long teeth, some with big faces, some with big bellies, some with faces on the belly, some with faces on the head. They are inhabitants of the Bhuta Loka. They are Bhutas. They are supposed to be the attendants of Lord Siva. They have terrifying forms. They do not cause any harm at all. They simply appear on the stage. They come to test your strength and courage. They can do nothing. They cannot stand before a pure ethical aspirant. Repetition of few Omkaras will throw them at a distance. You must be fearless. A coward is absolutely unfit for the spiritual path. Develop courage by constantly feeling you are the Atman.

Rising from the Seat

During meditation you may experience that you are rising from your seat. Some experience that they fly in the air.

Divine Light

Divine Light comes not through open doors but only through narrow slits. The aspirant sees the ray as a sunbeam passing through a chik into a dark room. It is like a "flash of lightning." This sudden illumination chokes all sounds of words. The aspirant is spellbound in ecstasy and awe. He trembles with love and awe just as Arjuna did when he had the Visvarupa Darshan of Lord Krishna. So bright and glorious is the Light environing the Divine that the initiate is dazzled and bewildered.

This is a kind of vision one occasionally gets during meditation. You may behold a dazzling light with abrupt motion. You may behold a head of marvellous form of the colour of a

flame red as fire, and very awful to look at. It has three wings of a marvellous length and breadth white as a dazzling cloud. At times they would beat terribly and again would be still. The head never utters a word but remains altogether still. Now and again there is beating with its extended wings.

Sometimes, bad spirits will trouble you. They may have ugly fierce faces with long teeth. Drive them with your strong will. Give the word of command "Get out." They will go away. These are vampires. They are elementals. They will not do any harm to the Sadhakas. Your courage will be tested. You will come across very good spirits also. They will help you a lot in your onward march. These are all Vighnas or obstacles on the way.

Aspirants are eager to get spiritual experiences soon. As soon as they get them they are afraid. They are awfully alarmed when they go above the body-consciousness. They entertain a passing wonder whether they will come back again or not. Why should they be afraid at all? It does not matter much whether they return to body-consciousness or not. All our attempts are mainly directed towards getting over this body and being one with the higher spiritual consciousness. Courage is needed. All sorts of forces have to be encountered on the way.

Some Doubts Clarified

Question

During meditation, you appeared before me. Your eyes were big, bright and penetrating. An electrifying sensation penetrated my whole being; then a light appeared—it became a point and vanished. The last thing I remembered was a click within the body; I lost complete awareness. I was swallowed up in an ocean of nothingness. I do not recollect anything during the period.

(1) Is this Samadhi?

(2) There is a circle of light where the Chakras should be.

(3) Chakras change, slightly different from book illustrations.

(4) Occasionally it takes five minutes to come back to normal consciousness.

(5) Sensitive nature to noise during the first 15 minutes of meditation.

(6) A loud noise hurts occasionally returning to consciousness with a jerk.

Answer

When the Nadis are purified through constant remembrance of the Name of the Lord (Japa) and when Chitta Suddhi (purification of the heart) sets in through selfless service to mankind, the student gets various kinds of Samadhi. That depends on the intensity of concentration during meditation. The experiences differ in all students. Some may get visions and hear voices. Appearance of lights is a sort of encouragement from astral entities. This is a sign of good spiritual progress.

(1) Yes, it is a kind of Samadhi. The student may not recollect any of the experiences, but can feel the tremendous inner spiritual strength, power, an indescribable happiness and peace.

(2) The light can be either circular or any other shape of Chakra.

(3) Chakras need not be exactly like the book illustrations.

(4) After deep meditation, it may take five minutes to come to normal consciousness. In some cases it may be more than half an hour. In many cases constant remembrance of the State will be there during the day also.

(5) Sensitive nature to sound is due to deep concentration.

(6) Loud noise is only a sort of feeling. The jerk is a sort of feeling only. No harm can come. These are common in all students who progress satisfactorily. They denote progress. Steadiness in practice is needed to attain higher stages in Sam-

adhi. The advanced students develop a new angle of vision—to see the Lord in all beings, to grasp the essence behind all names and forms. Those who make such tremendous progress must take nutritious food, plenty of fruit-juice and energy-giving food, frequent relaxation, ample rest. Glory to such dynamic Yogins.

Guidance on the Path

1. Bring your mind under perfect control. Make it a perfect instrument for the reception and expression of the highest spiritual experience.
2. In this world of sense-desire, Maya is the Lord. She holds the greater power in this world. But more powerful are the grace of the Lord, power of meditation, devotion, discrimination and dispassion.
3. When you are assailed by temptations during meditation, your guiding Deity will form a protective circle around you. Fear not. Be bold. March on courageously.
4. You will have to cross a vast void and a region of darkness during meditation. Fear not. You will get radiant light through the Grace of the Lord. Be patient. Push on.
5. The elemental forces will try to harm you in meditation, through the order of Maya. This is a test. God will give you strength to overcome all obstacles. Stand firm. Be adamant. Victory is always yours. A bed of nails will become a bed of roses for you. There will be a shower of flowers on your head. The hostile elements will be transformed into flowers.
6. You will be attacked from within through the projection of dark thoughts from your subconscious mind.
7. Dark thoughts will take various, dark, terrible, hideous forms. They will frighten you. Lower astral entities with dark faces and long teeth will terrify you. They will perish through the Grace of God and the power of your meditation.

8. You will be tested whether you are free from fear, ambition and passion.

9. You will get invitation from the Devatas. Thank them, do not yield.

10. Beautiful, celestial damsels will appear before you. They will sing, dance and smile and try to seduce you. Beware.

11. Be dispassionate. Detect their impurities, hollowness and impermanence. Use the sword of discrimination and axe of dispassion.

12. Come out victorious, O Ram! Wear the laurels of peace and enter the self-effulgent, Infinite Realm of Immortal Bliss which is beyond time and space.

The Sadhaka gets some experience during the course of his Sadhana, sees wonderful visions of Rishis, Mahatmas, astral entities of various descriptions, etc. He hears various melodious Anahata sounds (Nada). He smells Divya Gandha. He gets the powers of thought-reading, foretelling, etc. The Sadhaka now foolishly imagines that he has reached the highest goal and stops his further Sadhana. This is a serious mistake. He gets false Tushti or contentment. These are all auspicious signs that manifest on account of a little purity and concentration. These are all encouragement which God gives as a sort of incentive for further progress and intense Sadhana. The aspirant gets more strength of conviction by having these experiences.

Those who have not removed the impurities of the mind through selfless services, who have not practised the Yama, Niyama and who have not developed the various ethical virtues, who have taken to meditation without the above preliminary qualifications, are not able to hold the divine light when it descends. The mind is not strong enough to receive the powerful spiritual light. They get frightened and stop their Sadhana. This is a serious mistake. They should purify their heart and equip themselves with divine virtues and restart their Sadhana with redoubled force, energy and earnestness.

If they are irregular in their practice, if their Vairagya wanes, if they mix freely with worldly people, they get a definite setback, the grace vanishes, the experiences disappear. They are not able to rise up again to their original heights of spiritual glory.

Therefore, regularity in Sadhana and Para Vairagya should be always maintained.

The Sadhakas neglect their body on account of false Vairagya. They do not take proper food. They become weak. They are not able to continue their Sadhana vigorously. This is also one of the causes for their setback.

On account of their overenthusiasm, juvenile zeal, they overdo themselves in their Sadhana. They overexert. They go beyond their capacity. When this is coupled with neglect of proper and regular food, they get various diseases and give up their Sadhana.

Always a little, congenial work should be combined with meditation in the beginning, till one is well-established in deep meditation. During periods of relaxation a little study and a little work are helpful.

A neophyte should always practise meditation under the guidance of his Guru or a senior Sadhaka. This is vitally important.

Then there is the experience of cosmic consciousness. Glimpse of Brahman will not liberate you. They are Alpam (small experience). Only experience of Bhuma will give you salvation.

The highest experience is that in which you become identical with Brahman or the Absolute and behold Brahman everywhere.

Of course much depends upon the practice. You know that practice makes a man perfect. Feel the thrill of extreme joy that dawns when you are nearing the goal. You will experience a

wonderful calm now. Drink the nectar in the deep silence. In the profound silence the mysterious Atman will be revealed unto you like an Amalaka fruit in the palm of your hand. Avidya and Maya and their effects—Moha, fear, etc., will take to their heels. There will be light, knowledge, purity and bliss only everywhere.

Some experience glimpses of the transcendent wonders of the Atman. Some are on the borderland of the vast dominion of Atman. Some like Dattatreya, Jada Bharata, Vama Deva and Sadasiva Brahmedra had plunged deep in the ocean of Bliss. The more the thinning of the Vasanas, egoism and Moha, and Adhyasa, the greater the bliss of the Self. The more the Sadhana, the more the experience of joy of the Soul.

Discomfort During Meditation Explained

If an aspirant feels some discomfort during meditation, it is always physical, and never otherwise. The numbness that he feels, the jerks that he experiences, the ticklishness that he feels in the back, and even the fears that he may have that he might not come back to the worldly consciousness again,—are one and all merely of the flesh. Into a poor man's thatched mud-hut if the royal elephant were to enter, certainly there must be some noisy shatterings. A mortal frame, equipped to house low animalisms, in its circumscribed limitations may find it difficult all at once to hold and contain within itself the mighty grandeur of the Divine Presence. Hence the nervous twistings and muscle tremblings. The body is getting adjusted to hold on together to the new vibrations of Divine Potency that are now generated in the bosom of the seeker. Never mind or worry over these physical adjustments. Whenever you feel the numbness in the locked-up hands, untie them and massage each arm with the other palm all the while not stirring from your Asana nor opening your eyes. You may shift the pose of the hands to a position wherein they recline from the elbow down upon the thighs.

Please do not worry over the fact that you will not come back to the ordinary consciousness. No intelligent disciple will ever worry over such a problem so long as he has faith in and devotion to his Guru.

Chapter Four

SAMADHI OR THE STATE OF SUPER CONSCIOUSNESS

What Is Samadhi?

Samadhi is inner Divine Experience which is beyond the reach of speech and mind. There is no language or means to give expression to it. The state of Samadhi is all bliss, joy and peace. All mental activities cease now. There is no difference between subject and object.

This state is beyond all relativity. It is not a state of inertia. It is a condition of perfect awareness. It is not merely an emotional enthusiasm or an exhilarating feeling. It is direct, unique intuitive experience of Truth or Absolute Consciousness. It is not an experience that can be attained through a little practice. To attain Samadhi one should observe strict Brahmacharya, dietetic restrictions and must have purity of heart.

None can enter into Samadhi until he is himself a greatly purified soul. The mind should be perfectly purified. Then only the mechanism or vessel will be fit enough to receive the descent of Divine Light. It should be sufficiently strong to bear the pressure of sudden expansion of consciousness or cosmic vision which is above mind and which covers the whole existence in one sweep of this new exalted, magnanimous experience.

It is only through Samadhi that one can know the Unknown, see the Unseen, can get access into the Inaccessible. The sum total of all knowledge of the three worlds, of all secular sciences is nothing, nothing but mere husk, when compared to the Infinite Knowledge of a sage who has attained the highest State of Samadhi.

Samadhi is not a stone-like inert state as many people imagine.

When the mind is completely absorbed in meditation, it is termed Samadhi.

In Samadhi the unity of Jivatman and the Paramatman is realised.

In Samadhi you transcend the limitations of the empirical existence and attain a rich inner life.

In Samadhi the mind loses its own consciousness and becomes identified with the object of meditation.

Regular reading of religious books by itself is a kind of Savikalpa Samadhi.

The disciple should not sit idle and expect a miracle from the Guru to push him directly into Samadhi.

There is neither meditation nor Samadhi when one realises the Supreme Self.

In Samadhi of positive meditation, the Jnani sees within himself the world as a movement of ideas.

That Yogi who has experienced the pure Nirvikalpa Samadhi crosses over birth and death.

The state of cosmic consciousness is beyond description. It induces awe, supreme joy and unalloyed felicity. The state of cosmic consciousness is below the absolute consciousness wherein the seer, sight, the things seen, or the knower, knowable and knowledge, or the subject and the object become one. In cosmic consciousness there is yet the seer and the seen.

Cosmic consciousness is perfect awareness of the oneness of life. The Yogi feels that the universe is filled with one life, that is alive, vibrating and intelligent and that there is no such thing as blind force or dead matter. He gets the eye celestial and experiences bliss beyond understanding and description. He actually feels that all is himself only, that snakes, scorpions, tigers

are as much part of himself as his own eyes, nose, hands and feet.

He is one with the ether, flower, sun, ocean and sky. He feels the elixir of life, the nectar of immortality, flowing in his veins. He feels that the entire universe is bathed in a sea of satisfying love.

Jada Samadhi and Chaitanya Samadhi

Samadhi is of two kinds, viz., Jada Samadhi and Chaitanya Samadhi. There is a popular belief that Samadhi means sitting with a Kowpeen in a state of absolute unconsciousness in the Padmasana or lotus pose with perfect suspension of breath. Ordinary rung of mankind think that the man who is established in Samadhi should not have consciousness of his surroundings and should be absolutely insensible even if a knife is thrust into his body. Such Samadhis do certainly exist. They are all Jada Samadhis induced by Hatha Yogic Kriyas such as Khechari Mudra, Kumbhaka Pranayama or retention of breath, etc. The Prana is taken up and fixed in some Chakra. The man is practically dead for the time being. This is something like long deep sleep. These Samadhis are of no value. The Samskaras and Vasanas are not burnt up in toto. There is no perfect awareness during this Samadhi. The man returns from his Samadhi as the same old man with the same bundle of old Samskaras and Vasanas. He has no superintuitionial knowledge. This is a kind of acrobatic feat or internal gymnastics. Such Samadhis cannot give Mukti or liberation. Worldly people are deceived by such feats.

The true Samadhi is something entirely different. It gives supersensual knowledge. All doubts, delusion, the three knots (Avidya, Kama, Karma) are destroyed by the fire of wisdom. All Vasanas and Samskaras are fried in toto. It gives absolute fearlessness and an unruffled state of mind. This state is described in detail in Bhagavad Gita, Chap. II.

The state of Samadhi is maintained even during work. The mind and body are used as perfect instruments in the service of Atman that is seated in the hearts of all. Sri Sankara, Lord Krishna, Lord Rama did not move an inch from their being established in Brahman (Brahmi Sthiti) even during action. Raja Janaka enjoyed true Samadhi even while ruling his kingdom. He never lost sight of Brahman even for a moment. He was put to test and he said, "Even if the whole Mithila is burnt, nothing is lost for me. I have the inexhaustible imperishable wealth of Atman." He who is established in Samadhi keeps his mind and body in perfect balance and utilises them in the service of humanity, with Atma Bhava. He is ever fixed in Brahman. He is always in Samadhi. There is no tossing (Vikshepa) for him under any condition. He stands adamantine on account of his knowledge of the Self. Real Samadhi should be as much kept up in action as in meditation. This is the real test of one's inner strength and realisation. This is real Chaitanya Samadhi. A Samadhi that one enters into the mountain-caves and forests with closed eyes, but that is broken or shattered during work is no Samadhi at all.

Light on the Path of Samadhi

Mind and breath are like milk and water. Raja Yoga is control of mind. He who wants to become a perfect Yogi and to experience the wonderful Samadhi must control mind and breath. He must continuously practise Yoga and observe the rules. He must thoroughly overcome the five Tattvas.

Restraint of the mind (Nirodha) leads to Jnana. Nirodha is the culmination of Sankhya and Yoga. It is Nirodha which underlies all the Sadhanas or spiritual exercises. Restraint of the mind is the essence of all worship. This is Jnana and Dhyana. The highest end is attained by restraint of the mind. The mind should be completely restrained from the objects. The mind should be restrained till it attains dissolution in the heart.

Atman or Brahman is your immortal Self. It is the only blazing reality. If you know this Atman only you can attain perfection. Perfection can be yours in this very life. Atman is to be recognised, to be known as your innermost being through Samadhi. If you know this Atman, which is the Ultimate Reality, which is perfection, then only your life becomes useful and real existence. The knower of the Atman, with the inner perfection, crosses all sorrows and become free. If you do not know this Atman then there is great loss for you.

Samadhi is not a mere emotional enthusiasm or an exhilaration of feeling. It is the direct unique intuitive experience of Truth or Absolute consciousness or the Ultimate Reality. It is beyond all feeling, throbbing and thrill. There is perfect awareness in Samadhi which is beyond expression and feeling. The aspirant rests in his centre now—the goal of his search—and realises the absolute freedom, independence and perfection.

Just as a man who anxiously seeks the means of escape from the midst of a burning house, so also the aspirant should have a burning desire to free himself from the fire of Samsara. Then only he will be able to enter into deep meditation and Samadhi.

The mind becomes the very Brahman, when it is purified and brought into Samadhi state. In Samadhi there is no perception of duality, which is the cause for fear. Avidya is absent in Samadhi.

Samadhi installs you in the Atman. Through Samadhi the finite self is absorbed in the Infinite or Absolute consciousness. In Samadhi there is no mental tension. There is perfect stillness or perfect poise. There is total mental inhibition. Samadhi follows meditation. Deep meditation is Samadhi. The mind that is endowed with a finished discipline in intensive contemplation can enter into Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

In Samadhi the mind withdraws from its natural or habitual occupation and gets itself fixed upon the Atman which is not

touched by the mind. The mind does not at all function in Samadhi. It gets absorbed in Brahman. If you can consciously induce a state like deep sleep, it is no longer deep sleep, but it is Samadhi. It is sleepless sleep wherein the senses and the mind entirely cease their functioning and the veil of ignorance is destroyed by the fire of knowledge. The aspirant enjoys perfect joy of freedom and infinite, supracosmic, vast experiences and the supreme silence of the Imperishable.

In Samadhi the purified mind withdraws itself from the external objects, looks within and concentrates on the Innermost Self or the Atman. It resolves itself in the Atman, its source, and becomes Atman itself. It takes the form of Atman, just as camphor becomes the fire itself. Knowledge of Brahman or Atman is real experience and not mere knowing. To know Brahman is to become Brahman. "*Brahmavid brahmaiva bhavati*"—this is the emphatic declaration of the Upanishads.

In Samadhi there is revelation or insight or intuition. The Jnana Chakshus or Divya Chakshus is opened. The third eye of wisdom opens by itself when the Brahmakara Vritti is raised. The sage born of Samadhi-experience gets established in his own Self. He is endowed with cosmic vision and transcendental divine knowledge.

As long as you are in Samadhi Nishtha there is only Brahman or the Absolute. Nirantara Samadhi does not mean sitting blind-folded but the renunciation of attachment to the body and regarding individual soul and supreme Soul as one and knowing that the practitioner himself is Paramatman and acting upon this knowledge. Samadhi means the annihilation or absorption of the mind. Wherever he goes he beholds the one Self everywhere. Neither self-abnegation nor self-knowledge is enough, but the co-existence of both self-abnegation and self-knowledge constitutes Nirantara Samadhi. Self-knowledge is Brahma Nishtha. He who has acquired this has no body.

The state in which the mind remains free from sensations is Mukti. Vishaya means the function of the senses. Therefore the state of the mind remaining unconnected with the senses or with the mind's own functions or actions, viz., hopes, fears, etc., is Mukti. Mind without mingling with Brahman cannot be disconnected with sensations. Mind becomes one with Brahman. This is Mukti. This is the state of Nirvishaya.

Individual soul becomes Supreme Soul. This is Mukti. Just as salt mingled with water becomes water, so mind mingled with Brahman ultimately becomes Brahman itself. When the mind becomes Brahman, this world which is the creation of the mind, also melts away in Brahman, and becomes Brahman itself. Therefore, all this Brahman will come home only to him who has practised this Nishtha.

According to Vedanta annihilation of Avidya or ignorance leads to Samadhi. According to Patanjali Maharshi the aspirant attains Samadhi by removing the hold of Prakriti by practice and discipline.

The Vedantin enjoys the Eternal Bliss and natural easiness of Sahaja Samadhi, He remains as a Sakshi or silent witness. He does not make any serious attempt to control the psychic stream or thought current. He raises the Brahmakara Vritti by meditation on the significance of "Tat Tvam Asi" Mahavakya. The Chitta is modified in the form of Brahmakara Vritti. All other modifications are withdrawn. This Vritti annihilates the ignorance, and dies by itself, and Brahman shines out, as the aspirant realises his identity. When the Vritti is continuous, the highest form of Samadhi, i.e., Nirvikalpa Samadhi is attained. When it is intermittent, the sage attains Savikalpa Samadhi.

The Samadhi in the Jnani is effortless and spontaneous. "*Yatra yatra mano yati tatra tatra samadhayah.*"—wherever the mind goes there it experiences Samadhi. He rests in Samadhi always. There is no "In Samadhi" and "Out of Samadhi" for a sage. He experiences Samadhi always without any effort.

Hence it is called Sahajavastha or Sahaja Samadhi. He enjoys freedom, bliss and peace in all moments of his life. He drinks the nectar of immortality in this very life.

Yogic Samadhi is analytical and discriminative. In this Samadhi greater stress is laid upon the discrimination between the Prakriti and the Purusha. In Jnana Samadhi no discrimination is needed. Brahmakara Vritti raised by an attempt to become identical with the Supreme Self or Brahma Chintana destroys Avidya and dies by itself.

Samadhi

Samadhi is union with the Lord. It is superconscious experience. It is Adhyatmic Anubhava.

A Hatha Yogi through the practice of Khechari Mudra can shut himself up in a box which is then buried underneath the ground for months. There is no higher supersensual knowledge in this kind of Samadhi. In Jada Samadhi the Sadhaka is unconscious. It is more or less like deep sleep. The aspirant has no supersensuous knowledge. Doubtless this is a difficult Yogic Kriya, but it does not give Atma Jnana. It cannot destroy the Samskaras and Vasanas. Hatha Yogins of this type eventually become commercial people and do not thrive at all in the spiritual path. They run after name, fame and money and thus face a hopeless downfall in spirituality. In Chaitanya Samadhi, there is perfect awareness. The Yogi comes down with new supersensuous wisdom.

Samadhi, Mukti, Turiya are synonymous terms. Samadhi means superconsciousness. The meditator in Samadhi is conscious of his own Self. Mukti is freedom from birth and death. Mukti is attainment of Paramananda state or the state of supreme bliss. Mukti is freedom from all sorts of pains. Turiya is the fourth state. It transcends the three states, viz., Jagrat (waking state), Svapna (dream state), and Sushupti (deep sleep

state). To distinguish this state from the other three states, it is called the fourth state.

Moksha is loss of one's personality in the Divine. It is deliverance from delusion of personality. There is no annihilation by the melting of this little false personality. Just as the river becomes the ocean itself, the individual soul becomes the mighty supreme Soul with higher consciousness, and transcendental bliss, and knowledge.

The state of Samadhi is beyond the reach of mind and speech. Even in worldly experience, you cannot express the taste of an apple to one who has not tasted it, or the nature of the colour to a blind man. The state of Samadhi is all bliss, joy and peace. This much only can be said. One has to feel this himself.

In Samadhi or the superconscious state the meditator loses his individuality and becomes identical with the Supreme Self. He becomes an embodiment of bliss, peace and knowledge. So much only can be said. You can experience this yourself, through constant meditation.

Nirvikalpa Samadhi is the state of superconsciousness (Godhead). There is no Vikalpa (imagination) of any sort in this condition. This is the goal of life. All the mental activities cease now. The function of the intellect, and the ten Indriyas, cease entirely. The aspirant rests now in Atman. There is no distinction between subject and object. The world and the pairs of opposites vanish absolutely. This is a state beyond all relativity. It is not a state of inertia. It is a condition of perfect awareness. The aspirant gets knowledge of the Self, supreme peace and infinite indescribable bliss and joy. This state is indescribable. It has to be felt and experienced by the aspirant. The triad, viz., knower, knowledge and knowable, disappears. Man is Brahman now. There is no longer Jivahood. This is also called Yogaroodha state.

Try to enjoy that sleepless sleep wherein all the senses and mind remain in a state of quietude and the intellect ceases func-

tioning. This sleepless sleep is Maha Nidra or superconscious state. It is perfect awareness wherein the individual soul has merged itself into the Supreme Soul. There is no waking from this sleep. The show of names and forms eventually vanishes.

In Samadhi or superconscious state, the Yogic practitioner gets himself merged in the Lord. The senses, the mind and intellect cease functioning. Just as the river joins the ocean the individual soul mixes with the supreme Soul. All limitations and differences disappear. The Yogi attains highest knowledge and eternal bliss. This state is beyond description. You will have to realise this yourself.

II

Still the waves of the mind, and hold it steady in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This needs constant and protracted practice of meditation. There may be breaks in the meditation in the beginning. But practice can make you perfect. Later on you can remain absorbed in meditation. You can merge yourself in Samadhi with a mind steady like a flame protected from wind. Before getting sanguine success in meditation, get victory over the Asanas or poses first. Sit upon your seat with the steadiness of a rock for 2 or 3 hours. If the body is steady, the mind also will be steady.

Do not mistake a little concentration, or one-pointedness of mind for Samadhi. Simply because you have risen a little above body-consciousness on account of little concentration, do not think that you have attained Samadhi.

Separate the mind from the body and unite it with the Supreme Self. This is known as Samadhi or superconscious state. This will give liberation or freedom from births and deaths. Samadhi is obtained by practice for a long time with zeal and enthusiasm.

Samadhi is the highest goal which one can attain through meditation. It is not a thing that can be attained through a little

practice. To attain Samadhi one should observe strict Brahmacharya, dietetic restrictions, and must have purity of heart. If these are not attained there is no possibility of attaining that state. These preliminary qualifications should be grasped well and then only one must try to enter the portals of Samadhi. None can enter into Samadhi unless he is himself a great devotee of the Lord. Otherwise, the so-called Samadhi becomes Jada to him.

If the Vasanas and attachment to the objects of the world vanish entirely and if you are in that immovable state, you have become a Jivanmukta. You will abide in your own Self. You will rest in that non-dual supreme seat. The Jnana vision will arise in you. The light of wisdom will shine unobscured, like the sun in the absence of clouds. You will never be attracted to any worldly objects. You will be absolutely free from delusion and sorrow. You will actually feel that the Self alone pervades and permeates everything in the world. You will shine with Brahmic effulgence. You will possess equal vision and a balanced mind. You will be free from longing for sensual objects, because the mind will always be made cool with Brahmic Bliss. You will be bathed in the cool ambrosial nectar that dribbles from a contented and quiescent mind.

Shikhidhwaja was absorbed in the Brahmic state for 2 Ghatikas (48 minutes). He was as immovable as a pillar, in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. His wife Chudala, in the form of Kumbha Muni, his Guru, made a lion's roar, which could not even wake him up from his Samadhi. Though she tossed him up and down, no impression was made on him, in the least, in spite of his body falling down.

When you enter into deep meditation, the pulse beats may come to 30. The onlooker may not be able to perceive the breathing. The breath may not come out of the nostrils. In Jada Samadhi of Hatha Yogins, the breathing and heart will entirely

stop. In the initial stages of Chaitanya Samadhi, the lungs and heart will be functioning very very slowly.

Advanced aspirants should stop all sorts of work, and study of religious books even, if they want to enter into Samadhi quickly. They should observe Mauna and remain in a solitary place on the banks of Ganga, Yamuna or Narmada or any river. They should live on 1½ seers milk alone or milk and fruits. They should plunge themselves in Samadhi in right earnest. They should reduce sleep to 2 or 3 hours. They should start the practice in the beginning of winter in November. There is real rest in meditation. This rest is far superior to the rest that is obtained from sleep. Sound sleep even for half or one hour will suffice for the man who regularly meditates.

The State of Blissful Divine Experience

The meditation is Samadhi when it shines with the object of meditation alone, as it were, devoid of itself. The thinker and the meditated become one. The mind becomes the Dhyeyarupa. The separate notions ‘contemplation’ and ‘contemplated’ and ‘contemplator’ vanish. In the state of Samadhi, the aspirant is not conscious of any external or internal objects. Just as the arrow-maker, having his mind engrossed in the arrow, knows not the king passing by his side, so also the Yogi, knows not anything, when he is deep in his meditation.

Samadhi or blissful divine experience arises when the ego and the mind are dissolved. It is a state to be attained by one's own effort. It is limitless, divisionless and infinite. When this experience is realised, the mind, desires, actions, and feelings of joy and sorrow vanish into a void.

Samadhi is of various kinds. But of all of them there are only very few important ones.

The Samadhi experienced by a Bhakta is Bhava Samadhi. The devotee attains the state through Bhava and Maha Bhava. A Bhakta who meditates on the form of Lord Krishna will see

Krishna and Krishna only everywhere when he is established in Samadhi. He will see himself as Sri Krishna. Gopis of Vrindavan, Gouranga and Ekanath had this experience. Those who meditate on the all-pervading Krishna will have another kind of experience, the consciousness of the whole Virat.

Again, there are two other varieties of Samadhi, viz., Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa Samadhi. In the first variety there is Triputi or the triad, viz., knower, knowledge and the knowable or the seer, sight and the seen. The Samskaras are not destroyed. In the latter, the Samskaras are totally fried or destroyed. There is no Triputi in Nirvikalpa.

Samprajnata is another name for Savikalpa Samadhi. Asamprajnata is another name for Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

In Nirvikalpa Samadhi, there is not ego-consciousness. Ego and mind melt and fuse in Brahman. The pure mind, assumes the form of Brahman. This is known as Nirbij Samadhi. There is no prop for the mind in this Samadhi. The Samskaras are fried in toto. Savikalpa Samadhi deepens into Nirvikalpa Samadhi. There is no idea of any kind in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. There is no idea of any kind in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. It is thoughtless, Absolute consciousness.

Nirvikalpa means, that in which there is no Vikalpa. That which is not associated with any idea is Nirvikalpa. No imagination, no functioning of mind, or intellect. All Vrittis totally cease. There is only pure Consciousness or Awareness. All the Samskaras and Vasanas are fried in toto. All names and forms are burnt up. Asti-Bhati-Priya only remains. Asti-Bhati-Priya is Sat-Chit-Ananda. That which ever exists is Asti; that which shines is Bhati. This is Absolute Consciousness. And that which gives Happiness is Priya; this is unalloyed Bliss, Ananda. In Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the mind is freed from distraction and attachments. It rests unmoved like the flame of a lamp sheltered from the wind.

In Samadhi or Superconsciousness the student gets himself merged in the Lord. The senses, the mind and the intellect cease functioning. Just as the river joins the ocean, the individual soul mixes with the Supreme Soul. The Samadhi bestows Supreme Knowledge, and one is freed from the wheel of birth and death and gets Kaivalya (Moksha) or Liberation.

The knowledge gained through the senses, in the relative world, is not the highest knowledge. It cannot give you permanent satisfaction and everlasting felicity and peace. It is limited knowledge. There is always a sense of void in you, in spite of your intellectual attainments of all sorts. There is an urge, in your mind to attain transcendental knowledge, the knowledge of the Eternal by which everything is known. *Yasmin vijnate sarvam idam vijnatam bhavati*. This divine knowledge is beyond the reach of the senses and the mind. The senses and the mind cannot penetrate into the heart of the ultimate Truth or the Infinite. They are finite instruments. The intellect and mind have got their own limitations. They can operate only in the earth plane. It is through intuitive insight that you can attain this transcendental knowledge of the Absolute in Samadhi. It is only through Samadhi that you can know the Unknown, you can see the Unseen, you can get access into the Inaccessible.

Dharana or concentration, Dhyana or meditation, Samadhi or superconscious state, are the inner limbs (Antaranga) of Ashtanga Yoga or Raja Yoga. They constitute the Antaranga Sadhana. They complete the psychic and mental discipline. These three—Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi—constitute Samyama. They are practised at a time. They are stages in the mental effort of concentration. Meditation follows concentration and Samadhi follows meditation.

In Samadhi the mind becomes one with the object of its concentration. The meditator and the meditated, the thinker and the thought, the subject and the object, become one. In concentration the mind is simply fixed on the object. In meditation the

mind is filled with the one idea of the object alone. All other thoughts are shut out.

In Samadhi the mind is stilled, the Chitta is silenced and the thoughts are controlled and all surging bubbling emotions are subdued. The Yogi passes into the transcendental calm or the stupendous ocean of silence and attains the transcendental knowledge of Brahman or the Eternal.

Samadhi or ecstasy is blissful union. The mind melts in the Eternal or Atman like salt in water or camphor in flame. It is a state of pure consciousness. The mind has always Vrittis or modifications. If the mind of man is freed from these through concentration and meditation he becomes Brahman. *Manaso vrittishunyasya brahmakarataya sthitih.*

Samadhi is a means of liberation or freedom from births and deaths. It leads to the direct intuitive perception of the Truth or the Infinite. It puts an end to all troubles of life and the causes of rebirth. It annihilates the impressions or Samskaras which give rise to fresh births. It helps one to tide over even Prarabdha even though all the fruition of his past Karmas has not ended.

Faith (Sraddha) or confidence in the power of Yoga, power (Veerya) for the concentration of mind, memory (Smriti) for concentration, Samadhi, the final aspect of Yoga, Prajna, discernment or the direct perception brought about by meditation,—become the means for the attainment of Samadhi.

Bhakti Yoga Samadhi

In Bhakti Yoga there is absence of the least tinge of pride and self-assertion. The devotee does unreserved total self-surrender to the Lord. He resigns himself completely to the Lord and obtains His Grace. Grace is a mighty spiritual force. It transforms the entire being of a devotee. It infuses in him inspiration and a new divine life. Self-surrender makes the devotee feel the reality of Divine Grace and Lord's readiness to bestow on him help at all times. It is through grace alone that the devo-

tee's whole being is galvanised and rejuvenated. Through Divine Grace there is inflow of Divine energy into the entire being of a devotee and his whole being is properly moulded for Divine realisation and divine instrumentality.

There are nine modes or rungs in (Navavidha) Bhakti. They are Sravana, Kirtana, Smarana, Padasevana, Archana, Vandana, Dasya, Sakhya and Atmanivedana. Sravana is hearing His Lilas. Kirtan is singing His Names. Smarana is remembrance. Padasevana is service of His feet. Archana is offering of flowers to the Lord. Vandana is prostration. Dasya is servant Bhava. Sakhya is friendship with the Lord. Atmanivedana is self-surrender or Saranagati.

Admiration, faith, devotion, Ruchi (taste for Name of the Lord, for repetition and singing), Nishtha (devoutness), Rati (intense attachment to the Lord), Sthayi Bhava (steadiness in Prema) and Maha Bhava (premamaya or Param Prema) are the eight steps in the ladder of Prema or Bhakti Yoga. Admiration, devotion, worship and absorption are the four stages in Bhakti Yoga. Salokya, Samipya, Sarupya and Sayujya are the four kinds of Mukti of the devotees.

Surrender draws down grace. The individual becomes one with the cosmic will through surrender. Grace makes surrender complete. Without grace perfect union is not possible. Surrender and grace are interrelated. Grace removes all obstacles, snares and pitfalls in the spiritual path.

The Bhakta gets Bhava Samadhi and Mahabhava. He enjoys the warm embrace of the Divine. He attains Divine Aishvaryam. All the spiritual wealth of the Lord belongs to him. He is endowed with divine vision or Divya Chakshus. He is endowed with Divya (lustrous) subtle body and Divya (divine) senses. He does not like to have complete absorption or merging in the Lord. He wants to remain himself separate in front of Him and taste the divine honey of Prema. The absorption in the Lord comes to him temporarily in the intensity of his love and experi-

ence in the beginning though he does not like it. He attains similarity with God. He is God-like in the beginning. Eventually, he attains Sayujya or Oneness.

Raja Yoga Samadhi

According to Raja Yoga, Samadhi is of two kinds, viz., Samprajnata and Asamprajnata. In the former, the seeds of Samskaras are not destroyed. In the latter, the Samskaras are fried or annihilated in toto. That is the reason why the former is called Sabija Samadhi (with seeds) and the latter as Nirbijja Samadhi (without seeds or Samskaras). Samprajnata Samadhi leads to Asamprajnata Samadhi.

The Samprajnata Samadhi is also known by the name Savikalpa Samadhi or Sabija Samadhi. This Samadhis brings perfect knowledge of the object of meditation. The mind continuously and to the exclusion of all other objects assumes the nature and becomes one with the object of its contemplation. The Yogi attains all the powers of controlling the nature in this Samadhi.

The Samprajnata Samadhi is of four kinds, viz., Savitarka, Savichara, Sananda and Sasmita Samadhi. All these Samadhis have something to grasp. There is Alambana or argumentation or questioning. They give intensive joy but they are not the best and finest forms of Samadhi. They cover the gross or the subtle elements of nature and the organs of sense. They give you the direct knowledge of the elements, objects and instruments of knowledge and some freedom.

These stages are in the form of steps of an ascending staircase. To begin with, meditation should be done on a gross form. When you advance in this meditation, you can take to abstract meditation, or meditation on subtle things or ideas. Mind should be gradually disciplined and trained in meditation. It cannot all at once enter into the highest Asamprajnata Samadhi or that which constitutes the highest subtle essence. That is the reason

why Patanjali Maharshi has prescribed the practice of various kinds of lower Samadhis. When the mind is extremely attached to gross objects, it is not possible to fix it on subtle objects all at once. There must be gradual ascent in the ladder of Yoga. You should place your footstep cautiously in each rung of the ladder. You should pass through successive stages before you attain the highest Asamprajnata or Nirvikalpa Samadhi. But Yoga Bhrashtas who have passed through the lower stages in their previous births can attain to the highest stage at the very outset through the grace of the Lord. If the Yogic student had reached the higher state, he need not revert to the lower stages.

All the forms of Samprajnata Samadhi are Salambana Yoga (with support) and Sabija Yoga (with seed of Samskara). The Yogins enjoy a form of freedom. Dharma Megha in Raja Yoga means "the cloud of virtue." Just as clouds shower rain, so also this Dharma Megha Samadhi showers on the Yogins omniscience and all sorts of Siddhis or powers. The Yogi enjoys a form of freedom. Therefore this Samadhi is called the Shower or cloud (Megha) of virtue (Dharma). The Yogi enjoys expanded vision of God.

Ritambhara, Prajnaloka, Prasannavahita are the three stages or Bhumikas of Samprajnata Samadhi. In Ritambara the content of the mental Vritti is Satchidananda. There is still a separate knower. You get Yathartha Jnana or real wisdom. In the second, every kind of Avarana (veiling) is removed. The third state is the state of peace in which the mind is destitute of all mental modifications. The knowledge that you get from testimony and inference is above the objects of the world; but the knowledge that you obtain from Samadhi is Divine Knowledge. It is supersensual, intuitive knowledge where reason, inference and testimony cannot go.

Savitarka and Nirvitarka Samadhis

Savitarka Samadhi is Samadhi with reasoning. It is a superficial attempt of the mind to grasp any object. In this Sam-

adhi, Sabda (sound), Artha (meaning), Jnana (knowledge) are mixed up.

The aspirant can meditate on the body of Virat or Lord Vishnu with four hands or Lord Krishna with flute in hand or any ordinary object. He will obtain the direct perception of all the peculiar features, the excellences (Gunas) and defects (Doshas) of the object of meditation. He will have complete knowledge of the object. He will be endowed with all the features of the object unheard of and unthought of. He will obtain these through Savitarka Samadhi. The Yogic student meditates on the object again and again by isolating it from other objects.

You can meditate on the gross elements also. You will gain power over them through intense meditation. The elements will reveal to you their truths.

Just as the new archer first aims at big object only and then at smaller ones gradually, so also the beginner in Yoga concentrates on the gross objects such as the five Maha Bhutas, Lord Hari with four hands, and then on subtle ones. In this manner the grasp of the objects by the mind becomes subtle. A Yogi directly perceives the real body of the Lord Vishnu as He lives in Vaikuntha by the force of his meditation although he remains at a great distance from the Lord.

In Savitarka Samadhi concentration is practised on gross objects and their nature in relation to time and space. This is a gross form of Samadhi. When the Yogi meditates on the elements as they are, by taking them out of time and space, then it is called Nirvitarka Samadhi without questioning or reasoning or argumentation. This is a subtle form of Samadhi.

In Savitarka there is Vikalpa or fanciful notion of word (Sabda), object (Artha) and idea (Jneya). There is no such notion in Nirvitarka Samadhi. There are three factors in the comprehension of a word, e.g., cow—(1) cow, the word, (2) cow, the object, (3) cow, the idea in the mind. When the meditator

imagines these three to be one and the same, it is an instance of Vikalpa or fanciful notion of the word, object and idea.

Savichara and Nirvichara Samadhi

If you meditate on the subtle Tanmatras and their nature in relation to time and space, it is Savichara Samadhi with deliberation or discrimination. This is Sukshma or subtle. This is subtler than Savitarka and Nirvitarka Samadhis. Tanmatras are the root-elements or Sukshma Bhutas. The five gross elements are derived from the Tanmatras through the process of quintuplication or mixing. Meditation goes a step higher in this Samadhi than in the previous one. The Yogi will get knowledge of the Tanmatras. He will obtain control over the Tanmatras. He will get the direct perception of the various subtle forms of the object culminating in primordial matter or Mula Prakriti.

The word 'subtle' indicates cause in general. It stands for all such causal principles as the Tanmatras or the primary elements, egoism or Ahankara, Mahat Tattva or intellect, and Prakriti.

There is a mysterious power, Achintya Sakti, in meditation. Although ordinary meditation is possible only in ways already heard and thought of, yet even such things as have not been heard or thought of may be directly cognised by the force of meditation.

There is no difference between the cause and its products. All gross objects are the products of the twenty-six principles. They are really of the same nature as that of twenty-six principles.

If you meditate on the subtle Tanmatras by taking them out of time and space by thinking as they are it will constitute Nirvichara Samadhi without deliberation or discrimination. As there is pure Sattva only in the mind owing to the eradication of Rajas and Tamas, the Yogi enjoys internal peace or contentment (Adhyatmic Prasad) and subjective luminosity. The mind is very steady.

Sananda Samadhi or the Blissful Samadhi

Now we proceed to describe the joyful Samadhi. This is joyous Samadhi and it gives intense joy. In this Samadhi the gross and the five elements are given up. The Yogi meditates on the Sattvic mind itself. He thinks of the mind which is devoid of Rajas and Tamas. There arises in the Yogi a peculiar perception in the form of intense joy through this type of Samadhi.

Sasmita Samadhi

In this Samadhi the mind is the object of meditation. It bestows the knowledge of the subject of all experiences. The Self knows the Self. The Sattvic state of the ego only remains. The Yogi can think himself now as without his gross body. He feels that he has a fine body. This Samadhi takes the Yogi to the root of experiences and shows the way to freedom.

The Yogi feels "I am (Asmi) other than the body." He experiences that the gross, subtle and joyous Samadhis are not the highest Samadhis. He finds defects in them also and gets disgusted with them. He proceeds further and practises Asmita Samadhi. He experiences Self-consciousness (Asmita). He experiences a feeling of 'enough' and develops dispassion in its highest form (Para Vairagya). This finally leads to the development of Asamprajnata Samadhi.

Asamprajnata Samadhi or Nirbija or Nirvikalpa Samadhi

This is the highest form of Samadhi. This comes after Viveka-khyati or the final discrimination between Prakriti and Purusha. All the seeds or impressions are burnt by the fire of knowledge. This Samadhi brings Kaivalya or Absolute Independence. This is the culmination or climax of Yoga, or final Prasankhyana which bestows the supreme, undying peace or knowledge. The Yogi enjoys the transcendental glories of the Self and has perfect freedom from the mental life. The sense of time is replaced by a sense of Eternity.

In this Samadhi, there is neither Triputi nor Alambana. The Samskaras are fried in toto. This Samadhi alone can destroy birth and death and bring in highest knowledge and bliss.

When you get full success or perfection (Siddhi) in Raja Yoga by entering into Asamprajnata Samadhi (Nirvikalpa State) all the Samskaras and Vasanas which bring on rebirths are totally fried up. All Vrittis or mental modifications that arise from the mind-lake come under restraint. The five afflictions viz., Avidya (ignorance), Asmita (egoism), Raga-dvesha (love and hatred) and Abhinivesha (clinging to life) are destroyed and the bonds of Karma are annihilated. This Samadhi brings on highest good (Nisreyasa) and exaltation (Abhyudaya). It gives Moksha (deliverance from the wheel of births and deaths). With the advent of the knowledge of the Self, ignorance vanishes. With the disappearance of the root-cause, viz., ignorance, egoism, etc., also disappear.

In the Asamprajnata Samadhi, all the modifications of the mind are completely restrained. All the residual Samskaras are totally fried up. This is the highest Samadhi of Raja Yoga. This is also known as Nirbija Samadhi (without seeds) and Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

In this Samadhi the Yogi sees without eyes, tastes without tongue, hears without ears, smells without nose and touches without skin. His Sankalpas can work miracles. He simply wills and everything comes into Being. This state is described in Taittariya Aranyaka I-ii-5.

“The blind man pierced the pearl, the fingerless put a thread into it; the neckless wore it and the touchless praised it.”

Eventually, the Purusha realises His own native state of Divine glory, Isolation or absolute Independence (Kaivalya). He has completely disconnected himself from the Prakriti and its effects. He feels his absolute freedom and attains Kaivalya, the highest goal of Raja Yoga. All Klesha Karmas are destroyed now. The Gunas having fulfilled their objects of Bhoga and

Apavarga now entirely cease to act. He has simultaneous knowledge now. The past and the future are blended into the present. Everything is "Now." Everything is "Here." He has transcended time and space. The sum total of all knowledge of the three worlds, of all secular sciences is nothing but mere husk when compared to the Infinite knowledge of a Yogi who has attained Kaivalya. Glory, glory to such exalted Yogins!

How the Yogi Comes Down from Samadhi

Examples of Sikhidhvaya and Prahlada

Sikhidhvaya entered into Nirvikalpa Samadhi. He was immovable as a pillar in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. His wife (Chudalai) made a lion's roar. This did not wake him up from the Samadhi. Then she tossed him up and down. The body fell down, but he was not brought down to his consciousness. Then she concentrated her mind and found one thing in her Yogic vision that there was some residue of Sattva in his heart which indicated to her that there was intelligence yet animating the body.

Like flowers and fruits latent in a seed, a residue of Sattva, the cause of intelligence, rests always in the heart of one who is in Samadhi. Then she entered into the subtle body of the king and caused that part of it which had the residue of pure Sattva in it to vibrate. Then she returned to her own body and chanted the Sama Veda songs. Then Sikhidhvaja came back to his external consciousness. It is only through the residue of Sattva that Jivanmuktas are awakened to an external perception of objects.

Prahlada seated himself in Nirvikalpa Samadhi for five thousand years. Lord Hari caused his Panchanjanya to be sounded in order to intimate Prahlada of his arrival. Prahlada slowly recovered consciousness on the physical plane. He opened his eyes slowly. Prana and Apana began to percolate all throughout the Nadis. In the twinkling of an eye, the mind became gross, and his eyes, mind, Prana and body began to glow with life with their respective functions.

In the case of Jivanmuktas the pure Vasanas exist like burnt seeds. They will never be reproductive of rebirth. These pure Vasanas are associated with Sattva Guna and Atmic Dhyana. They exist in Jivanmuktas like Vasanas in deep sleep. Even after the lapse of a thousand years, so long as the body is in existence, the pure Vasanas will be latent in the heart of Jivanmuktas and will melt away gradually. It is only through these pure Vasanas that Jivanmuktas are awakened to perception of the external world.

O Man! You are surrounded by the wild fire of Samsara and the three fires. You are travelling in the dire forest of Moha. The tiger-mind is threatening to devour you. You are captured by the thieves, the six dacoits—Arishadvargas, viz., lust, anger, greed, etc. You are stung by the snake, Asa or desire. Find out the means of escape at once. Approach a spiritual preceptor. Serve him with faith and devotion. Get from him spiritual instructions. Follow them to the very letter. Free yourself from the thraldom of mind and matter by entering into Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Jnana Yoga Samadhi

Jnana Yoga Samadhi is of two kinds, viz., Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa. Again Savikalpa Samadhi is of two kinds, viz., Drishyanuvid when it is connected with an object and Shabdanuvid when it is connected with a sound.

Meditate on the consciousness as the witness for the modifications of the mind, such as desires, etc., which are to be regarded as perceivable objects. This is inner Antar Drishyanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi.

When you meditate and actually feel "I am Asanga (unattached) Satchidananda, self-luminous, Advaita Svarupa," it is Antah Shabdanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi.

That steady state of the mind like the unflickering flame of a light in a place free from wind wherein one gets indifferent to

both objects and sounds owing to his total merging in the realisation of his own real Self (Brahman) is termed Antar Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Just as you practise meditation inside the heart, when you see the Sat Vastu—Brahman only in the external objects by separating the names and forms, it is termed Bahir Drishyanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi.

That constant reflection that the unlimited Satchidananda Vastu which is always of one nature is Brahman, is the middle kind of Samadhi or Bahir Shabdanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi.

By the practice and experience of the above two kinds of Samadhi, that steady state of the mind produced owing to the realisation of bliss (like the ocean without waves) is called the third kind of Samadhi or Bahir Nirvikalpa Samadhi. One should always spend his time in these six kinds of Samadhi. By these Samadhis the identification with the body vanishes and the highest Self is realised and the mind is always in Samadhi wherever (or whatever place) and to whatever object it is directed (or runs on there).

When the Samadhi is associated with the sound "I am Brahman—Aham Brahma Asmi" it is Shabdanuvid. When it is not associated with sound of "Aham Brahma Asmi" it is Ashabdanuvid.

In Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the mind is fixed in Advaita Brahman without any Triputi, i.e., any idea of knower, knowledge and knowable, and is without recognition of subject and object. Savikalpa Samadhi is a means (Sadhana) to the end—Nirvikalpa Samadhi is the fruit or the result.

Though there is a perception of duality in the Savikalpa Samadhi inasmuch as there is distinct recognition of subject and object, yet the duality only helps to know the Advitiya Brahman; in the same way as in an earthen object, there is a perception of earth, though there be an appearance of an earthen jar,

etc., so, too, is there the perception of the secondless Brahman alone, even though there be an appearance of duality.

Nirvikalpa Samadhi is of two kinds, viz., Advaita Bhavanarupa Samadhi which is Vrittisahita (Brahmakara Vritti is present here) and Advaita Avastharupa Samadhi which is Vrittirahita (Brahmakara Vritti dies here). Advaitabhavanarupa Samadhi is Sadhana, means to an end. Advaita-avastharupa Samadhi is the result or fruit.

In Vichara Sagar you will find: in this manner the difference between the two kinds of meditation is established: that is to say, in the meditation with recognition of subject and object, there is perception of duality with that of Brahman, and in the meditation without recognition of subject and object, there is no conscious perception of the three integral constituents, knower, knowledge and object to be known; likewise in the state of profound slumber and this second variety of meditation, there is this difference; that in the former, there is an absence of the modification of the mental function in the shape of Brahman while in the latter, there is no perception of it. Thus, then, there is an entire absence of the internal organ with its function in profound slumber, while in the unconscious meditation there is only a want of the perception, though the internal organ and its function are modified into the shape of the Brahman; now this modification proceeds from the practice of the conscious variety of meditation; hence that is reckoned as one of the best means whose result is this meditation without recognition of subject and object.

Unconscious meditation is of two kinds. (1) Non-dual mental perception (2) Non-dual form of resting in Brahman.

(1) When the non-dual modification of the internal organ after it has assumed the shape of the Brahman arises with the unknown function it is called a form of non-dual mental perception of the unconscious meditation. Here much practice is

needed so that the functional modification of Brahman also ceases; and

(2) When the function has been completely done away with, it constitutes the non-dual condition of unconscious meditation. Then just as water sprinkled on red-hot iron is absorbed into the body of the metal, so by such persevering and firm practice of the non-dual perceptual form of the unconscious meditation, the function merges into the extremely manifested Brahman, and this resting on the non-dual Brahman-form of the unconscious meditation is the chief result of which the first or perceptual is a means only.

Between the non-dual resting and the profound slumber the difference consists in the merging of the mental function in ignorance in the latter and the merging of the same function in the extremely tangible Brahman in the former; the felicity of the latter is enveloped in ignorance while the blissfulness of Brahman perceived in the former is entirely devoid of covering.

There is neither darkness nor void in this experience. It is all light. There is neither sound nor touch nor form here. It is a magnanimous experience of unity or oneness. There is neither time nor causation here. You become omniscient and omnipotent. You become a Sarvavid or all-knower. You know everything. You know the whole mystery of creation. You get Immortality, higher knowledge and eternal bliss.

All dualities vanish here. There is neither subject nor object. There is neither Sakara nor Nirakara. There is neither meditation nor Samadhi. There is neither Dvaita nor Advaita. There is neither Vikshepa nor one-pointedness. There is neither meditator nor meditated. There is neither day nor night.

When you are established in the highest Nirvikalpa Samadhi you have nothing to see, nothing to hear, nothing to smell, nothing to feel. You have no body-consciousness. You have full Brahmic consciousness. There is nothing but the Self. It is a grand experience. You will be struck with awe and wonder.

This experience arises when the ego and the mind are dissolved. It is a state to be attained by one's own effort. It is limitless, divisionless and infinite, an experience of being and of pure consciousness. When this experience is realised, the mind, desires, actions and feelings of joy and sorrow vanish into a void.

The Jivahood has gone now. The little 'I' has melted. The differentiating mind that splits up has vanished. All barriers, all sense of duality, differences, separateness have disappeared. There is no idea of time and space. There is only eternity.

Sing Om. Om is your real name. Om is Atman. Om is Brahman. Om is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. Om is Silence. Om is your centre. Om is your refuge. Om is heart (Hridaya). Do Japa of Om. Chant Om. Feel Om. Live in Om. Om is everything. Hum Om. Live in Truth. Feel His presence always everywhere, in flowers and trees, in stones and chairs, in birds and dogs, in sun and stars. Enter the Silence. Rejoice in Atman. Rejoice in the light of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. There is a vast ocean of Ananda (Bliss) and knowledge at the back of the mind. Drive the mind back to its source (Yoni) and support (Adhisthana).

Remember Om. Remember Soham, Om Sivoham, Sivoham, Aham Brahma Asmi, Analhuq. Truth is One. These Mantras remind you of your identity with the Supreme Soul. They are Mahavakyas (great sentences) of the Upanishads. They blow out this little false ego, this illusory 'I', into an airy nothing.

Silence is Atman. Atman is Maha Mouna (great silence). "Ayam Atma Santah—This Atman is silence", is the declaration of the Srutis. Centre in Atman. Forget not this centre whatever may be your avocation or circumstances. There is no room for despair. *Nil desperandum*. Be up and doing, my friends. Even the vilest of us shall attain salvation. Hear once more the words of promises given by Lord Krishna: "Kaunteya

pratijaneehi na me bhaktah pranasyati—O Kaunteya! Know thou for certain that my devotee perisheth never.” (Gita IX-31)

Rest in the centre and draw peace and strength. Aspire and draw. You will have to keep the knowledge of Atman steady (Taila-Dharavat) like the steady flow of oil from one vessel to another. You must get Brahmakara Vritti Sthiti (getting established in the centre). When you think of Atman, when the thoughts of objects subside, this Brahmakara Vritti arises from the Sattvic Antahkarana (pure mind). When the flow of Brahmic idea is quite steady, you will have Sahaja Nishtha or natural state. This is Svajatiya Vritti Pravaha (inundation of ideas of Self alone).

A little practice in right earnest is indispensably requisite. Practice in Jnana Yoga can be done at all times. Sometimes when you are free and when you have leisure, you can retire into a room for deep meditation. For Jnana-Yoga no Asana or room is necessary. Keep up the Brahmakara Vritti (feeling of the idea of Infinity) while walking, talking, eating, etc.

Whenever you see objects, deny or reject the names and forms which are changing—Jada (insentient) and Vinasi (perishable)—and take out the hidden Antar-Atman (Asti-Bhati-Priya) which is Satchidananda. In course of time the illusory names and forms will vanish. You will enter into Bhava Samadhi or Samyak Jnana or Bahir Nirvikalpa.

May Holiness, Glory, Splendour, Honour, Peace, Power and Poise attend on thee for ever. Thou art Soul. Thou art Truth. Thou art Atman. Thou art Brahman. Thou art Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute in essence when you delete Upadhis (limiting adjuncts, viz., Mind, Indriyas, Prana, body and causal body). “Tat Tvam Asi” my dear friends!

Six Kinds of Jnana Yoga Samadhis

Antar Drishyanuvid Savikalpa, Antah Sabdanuvid Savikalpa, Antar Nirvikalpa, Bahya Drishyanuvid Savikalpa,

Bahya Sabdanuvid, Bahya Nirvikalpa are the six kinds of Samadhis.

The visible objects, and the Vrittis of anger, lust, etc., are the manifestations of Brahman. The Drik or Brahman who silently witnesses all the visible and the Vrittis, who is hidden in the Vrittis and visible like the thread of a flower garland, is the Sakshi or witness or the Knower of everything.

All the Vrittis or mental modifications are clearly seen by the Silent Witness or Brahman. The visible (Drishya) are not distinct from the Drik or seer (Sakshi or witness). Everything is the manifestation or embodiment of the Drik or seer. Visibles are nothing but the Drik or seer. Investigation or enquiry like this (Svarupa Anusandhana) is Antardrishyanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi.

The Samadhi that is associated with the mental repetition, reflection, Bhava and feeling and identification “I am Asanga Brahman”, “I am self-luminous Immortal Self”, “I am Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman” is Antar Sabdanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi. The visibles are melted or dissolved or involved in Brahman through the process of Layachintana. Layachintana is reflection in the following manner. “The earth is involved into its cause water, water into its cause fire, fire into air, air into ether, ether in Tamas, Tamas in Avyaktam or Mula Prakriti and Avyaktam in Brahman. Nothing exists now. Everything is Brahman.” This is a new kind of vision or Drishti created through a Vedantic Yukti.

If you give up the above two kinds of Samadhis along with all sorts of mental activities, if you remain in a thoughtless state (Nischinta) as an embodiment of Suddha Chinmatra Rupa Brahman then this is called Antarnirvikalpa Samadhi. Just as you practise the three kinds of internal Samadhis so also you will have to practise the three kinds of external Samadhis also in order to destroy all kinds of duality.

The world of names and forms is superimposed upon Brahman just as snake is superimposed on the rope. Just as the water that is mixed with foam, whiteness, etc., is called a wave in the ocean, so also the Svarupa that is constituted of five things collectively, viz., Sat-Chit-Ananda Nama Rupa is called Prapancha. You will have to delete the superimposed names and forms and to view the world as the Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman alone. This is Bahya Drishyanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi. You will have to melt or dissolve the names and forms in the Brahman with the firm determination that there really exists nothing, save Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman and then to identify yourself with the Brahman.

Advaita, blissful eliminating or negating the superimposed names and forms is Bahya Sabdanuvid Savikalpa Samadhi. That steady thoughtless state like the waveless ocean in which the sage has become one with the Brahman without any sort of mental or physical activity, just as the lump of salt when dissolved in water becomes one with water, is Bahya Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The mind of a sage who has practised these six kinds of Samadhis enters into Samadhi whenever it moves about. That sage who is established in this Nirvikalpa Samadhi is a Gunatita, Bhagavad Bhakta, Ativarnashrami or a Brahmana.

Samadhi According to the Upanishads

1. Samadhi is that state of pure consciousness, the supreme blissful state, free from the triad (the meditator, meditated and meditation). It is the state where the Jivatma becomes one with the Paramatma.

2. When the Chitta or mind is steady like the flame of a lamp in a windless place, when it has given up the idea of meditator and meditation, and when it constantly dwells in the Dhyeya Vastu or Brahman, then Samadhi ensues.

3. The mind when it is free from thoughts, desires and emotions, merges in the Supreme Brahman. This state is Samadhi.

4. When, through knowledge of the Self which is seated within one's heart, he attains Vijnana or direct realisation and when the body-idea is completely eradicated and when peace is attained, in that state the Vrittis, mind and intellect are destroyed. This state of destruction of mind is Samadhi.

5. Having controlled the Prana and Apana during Kumbhaka with the gaze steady fixed at the tip of the nose, performing the Shanmukhi Mudra with the fingers of the two hands, the mind merges itself in the sound of Pranava or Om.

6. After the dribbling of nectar, like the milk from the cow's udder, the group of senses becomes calm by withdrawal, and then results Manonasa (destruction of the mind). This is Yoga Samadhi.

7. When the five organs of knowledge are at rest together with the mind and when the intellect ceases functioning or becomes calm, that they (the seers) call the highest state.

8. When all Sankalpas (desires) of the mind become calm, when the mind is neither waking nor sleeping, when it is motionless and calm like a stone, the highest Brahmic state of Samadhi is attained.

9. When the Prana moves in the middle (the Sushumna, leaving both the Ida and Pingala) the mind becomes steady. Perfect state of tranquillity of the mind is the Brahmic state of Samadhi called Manonmani.

10. The Jivanmukta attains Sarupamanonasa which leaves behind a slight trace of ego. But for a Videhamukta there is complete destruction of the ego, sleep and all sins. He attains Arupamanonasa.

11. When the Chitta or mind is free from all flickering desires, when the mind is destroyed, it is the peaceful state which is like unto Sushupti or deep sleep while (the Yogi is) awake.

12. That state is neither waking nor dreaming on account of the absence of Sankalpa or desire. It is not also Sushupti or sleep because of the absence of inertness there.

13. Knowledge of Sattva or Brahman which is like the fire which burns up the grass of Vasanas (desires) is indicated by the word Samadhi and not the state of inertia or mere silence.

14. The complete eradication of Vrittis caused by the destruction of thoughts by generating the Brahmakara Vritti or meditation on Brahman is called Samadhi.

15. When the currents of Raga-Dvesha attain a feeble state by the knowledge that Brahman is not any of the objects seen or heard of, the steadiness in the knowledge of Brahman is strengthened by the practice of knowledge and dispassion, and this state (Nishtha) is known as Samadhi.

16. "I am the Supreme Brahman; I am Brahman alone" when this one thought remains to the exclusion of all other thoughts, it is called Samadhi.

17. The rising of knowledge of the identity of Jivatman and Paramatman and the complete forgetfulness of meditation (Triputi) is called Samadhi.

18. O wise man! The sages understand Samadhi to be that state of supreme intelligence or pure consciousness attained by the self-controlled satiated Chitta, which points out the way to the knowledge of Brahman.

19. The state of the mind which is devoid of changing thoughts, free from egoism and which does not follow the course of the pairs of opposites—heat and cold, pleasure and pain etc.,—is Samadhi. The steady position of the Merudanda (spine) is also indicated by Samadhi.

20. The state of steadiness of the mind, free from all craving for sensual enjoyment, free from the ideas of enjoyment, free from the ideas of acquiring and giving up,—that state of fullness of the mind is called Samadhi.

21. The merging of the mind into the Atman like salt put in water is called Samadhi.

22. Destruction of all Sankalpas and knowledge of the Sameness of Jiva and Brahman without the least difference is called Samadhi.

23. Devoid of Vrittis, devoid of mind and intellect, devoid of decay, devoid of all changes, is the state of Samadhi.

24. The steady flow of Brahmakara Vritti devoid of the egoism which asserts "I am this body" "I am the mind" etc., caused by the practice of meditation, is called Samprajnata Samadhi.

25. The Samadhi wherein there is destruction of all Vasanas or Vrittis of the mind and which brings face to face the enjoyment of the Supreme blissful state is termed Asamprajnata Samadhi—dear to the Yogins!

26. Leaving aside all the objects consisting of names and forms by the direct realisation of the bliss of the Atman, the mind becomes steady like flame in a windless place. This is Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

27. The light of consciousness lighted up by the steady flow of Antarmukha Vritti (fixing the mind on the Atman) is the Samadhi practised by sages wherein all desires drop away by themselves.

28. Samadhi is that real state of direct realisation of the supreme Self which is all auspiciousness which is all-full, all-pervading and fills the above, below and the intervening spaces.

Samadhi in Six Months

Samadhi is union with God or Brahman. If you are an Uttama Adhikari, first-class aspirant, equipped with the four

means or qualifications and endowed with Tivra Vairagya and an intense longing for liberation and if you have a Brahmasrotri Brahmanishtha like Sri Sankara or Lord Krishna to back you up, you will realise the Self in the twinkling of an eye. Within the time taken to squeeze a flower with your fingers, you can realise the Self. Within the time taken for a grain of gram to roll when placed on the outer surface of a pot, you can have Antar Darshan. There is no difficulty at all. The aspirant should be like Hastamalaka or Padmapada of Sri Sankara or Arjuna of Lord Krishna. He should have intense devotion towards his Guru. Sraddha is a great qualification in the path of Jnana Yoga. It is rational faith here, while in Bhakti Yoga it is a blind faith. If the ground of Antahkarana is not well prepared, if there is no 'Chitta Suddhi' (purity of heart), even Isvara, even thousand Sankaras or Krishnas cannot do anything in this matter. Be rest assured of this. Through Ashtavakra, Raja Janaka realised within the twinkling of an eye. Arjuna had Self-realisation in the battlefield within an hour and a half.

Mukunda Rai (of Maharashtra) put a Badshah on Samadhi in a second, when he was on horse-back. There are so many instances.

In this Kali Yuga you need not do much Tapas as people did in days of yore. People used to stand on one leg for several years, before. They did many austerities. This you will find in Mahabharata and other religious books. Ishvara has shown His mercy on people of this age owing to the poor physique and short duration of life. By Tapas and meditation one can realise very quickly if he is earnest, sincere and vigilant in this age. When you want to catch a train at 4 a.m. in the morning, how vigilant, cautious and nimble you are. You prepare the bundles at night. You prepare at night some sweets or eatables for the morning 'Chota-hazri'. You adjust the alarm in the timepiece to get up at 3 a.m. So many other things you do. If you show, even a tenth part of this vigilance, sincerity and dexterity in the spiri-

tual line also, you can have Samadhi in six months. No one on earth or heaven can prevent you from getting at it.

Samadhi in Six Months as Enjoined in the Mahabharata

Gathering his mind, the Yogi should retire to a mountain cave, a temple or a secluded room. He should not associate with anything through mind, speech and action; for accumulation of and association with things cause misery to Yogis. He should cultivate indifference towards everything. He should be regular about his diet. Worldly gain should cause him no pleasure, nor worldly loss any sorrow. He should look upon with an equal eye both one who censures him and one who bows before him. Whether good is happening to anybody or evil, he should not reflect. When there is gain he should not be beside himself with joy, nor should he worry when there is loss. He should look upon all beings with an equal eye and should remain unattached like the air. He who thus keeps his mind in health, works for others, cultivates an equal eye towards everything and everybody, and lives for six months a regular disciplined life can realise Brahman and attain Brahmanhood (Nirvikalpa Samadhi) himself.

Some Experiences in Samadhi

Sage Uddalaka's Experience

The Sage Uddalaka was not able to master Samadhi which leads one into the blissful realm of Reality, because the monkey-mind jumped speedily from one branch to another of sensual objects. He seated himself in Padmasana and uttered Pranava (Om) with high sounding intonation. Then he started his meditation.

He forcibly controlled his mind. With great difficulty he separated the senses from the objects. He dissociated himself completely from all external objects. He closed the avenues of the body. He fixed his mind in the heart. His mind was freed

from all the Vikalpas. He destroyed all thoughts of objects just as a warrior kills with his sword his foes who rise against him again and again.

He saw before him a radiant light. He dispelled Moha. He passed through the stage of darkness, light, sleep and Moha. He eventually reached the stage of Nirvikalpa Samadhi and enjoyed perfect calmness. After six months, he woke from his Samadhi. He would spend in one sitting, days, months and even years in deep Samadhi and then wake up.

King Janaka's Experience

"Till now I have not been able to bore a hole in this pearl of mind. Now I will do so and make a rosary of it by stringing it in the string of experience and wear it on my person. I have learnt it all through the omniscient Siddhas, as my Gurus. I am now in the enjoyment of that bliss which pertains to the pure Brahman. I have gradually dispelled from my mind such unrealities as I, you, and other differences of conception. I will never hereafter bring them back to my mind. I am now victorious in the conflict with my great adversary of the mind which spoiled my Atma-Jnana. I have completely divested myself of all the pains which afflicted me. I have attained the life of quiescence. O discriminative Jnana, which uplifted me to this lofty state, I adore thee."

Thus did King Janaka remain statue-like in Samadhi, after having destroyed all fluctuations of mind. After being in it for a long time, he returned from it and then surveyed the universe through his quiescent mind—his impure one having been destroyed past resurrection—with the following remarks: 'What object is there in this world for me to encompass? What is illusory? To my present scrutinising eye, all is pure Jnana only. I cognise nothing but the one immaculate Atma-Jnana—my own Reality. I will never long for any object I do not come across; nor will I evince any aversion towards any object that I do not come by. I will remain immutably fixed in my own Self of

Atma-Jnana. Things will happen as preordained.' So saying, the king was absorbed with Brahmic bliss in the non-dual state.

King Bali's Experience

The king Bali fell to meditating upon the universe and became convinced of the truth of the words of his Acharya, exclaiming thus: "This supreme earth is no other than Jnana; the three Lokas are Jnana; my real nature is Jnana; all the ordained Karmas are Jnana only. I have now become that resplendent Brahmic One which shines in its real nature, devoid of the visibles and the visual. I have now become that all-full Principle which, being of the nature of Jnana without any objects to bind it, pervades all objects at one and the same time, and is the quiescent Jnana-Akasa and intelligence itself". Then contemplating upon (or uttering) Pranava (Om) mentally, which is the real significance of the Absolute Jnana, he entered trance-like into Dhyana (meditative state) and then freed from Sankalpas, Karmas, the three kinds of desires (for wife, sons and wealth), doubts, contemplation, intelligence and objects as well as their substratum, the knower, he was statue-like in Samadhi for a long period. Thus did the emperor Bali remain immobile like the light of a lamp in a windless place. And since he shone as the Absolute Sat, without the stains of love and hate, and with a replete mind, such a state can best be likened to a clear sky in the autumnal season when no clouds mantle it.

When the Emperor passed thus his days in Samadhi, the courtiers serving under him repaired to the topmost storey of the king's mansion in search of him. There they found him in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. After a long time, he awoke and began to perform the regal duties with a mind free from desires and egotism. Through his stainless mind, he was never flurried in adversity or prosperity, neither did he sink nor swim amidst pleasures or pains. Thus was he with an equal eye over all.

However unlimited were the armies of good and bad thoughts that cropped up unceasingly in his mind, however

countless were the objects, imaginary and real, that manifested themselves before him, yet he was able to control them all in one centre.

Kacha's Experience

Once upon a time, Kacha, after having returned from the Supreme Samadhi he was in, exclaimed thus with an exhilarating heart and a voice that did not know how to find its expression through its ecstatic enjoyment: 'What is it that I shall have to do? To which quarters shall I fly (there being none for me now)? What shall I cease to perform or abstain from? Like the flood of the deluge, my Self alone pervades everywhere in this world. Whether in body or out of it, in the quarters or Akasa or in the earth or any other place, my Self alone pervades. There is no object which is not found in my own Self. The Self-shining One is no other than my own Self and this Satchidananda alone shines (or is).'

Obstacles to Samadhi

Be courageous friends! You will come across various obstacles when you endeavour to control the mind and enter into Samadhi. You will have to conquer Laya (mental inactivity), Vikshepa (distractions), Kashaya (passion) and Sukharaga (taste for pleasure).

Laya or mental inactivity is a state which is equivalent to deep sleep. This is as much a source of evil as passion.

Wake up the mind in Laya. Even though you have conquered Laya and distraction by repeated practice, by Vairagya and Jnanabhyasa or Brahma Chintana, yet the mind will not enter into a state of perfect balance or serenity. It will be in an intermediate stage. The mind is still not freed from Raga or attachment which is the seed of all its activity in the direction of external objects. There is still lurking passion or hidden Vasanas or Kashaya. You will have to restrain the mind again and again by Vichara and do rigorous meditation and practice of

Samprajnata or Savikalpa Samadhi. Finally you must rest yourself in Asamprajnata or seedless Samadhi (Nirbijā Samadhi).

You are not able to enter into Samadhi, because you are not able to practise meditation. You are not able to do profound meditation, because you are not able to fix the mind steadily or concentrate. You are not able to concentrate properly, because you are not able to practise Pratyahara or the withdrawal of the senses from the objects thoroughly. You are not able to practise Pratyahara thoroughly, because you have not obtained mastery over Asanas and Prana through Pranayama and you are not established in Yama and Niyama, which are the foundations of Yoga.

The aspirant who wants to attain Samadhi should have patience like that of the bird Tittibha which tried to empty the ocean with its beak. Once he makes a firm resolve, gods will come to his help in the same way that Garuda came to the help of Tittibha. Help invariably comes from all beings in a righteous act. Even the monkeys and squirrels helped Rama to rescue Sita. He who is endowed with self-control, courage, prowess, fortitude, patience and perseverance, strength and skill, can achieve anything. You should never give up your attempt even if you face insurmountable difficulties.

Whenever desires trouble you, try to attain Vairagya by looking into the defects of sensual life. Cultivate dispassion or indifference to sensual pleasures. Think that enjoyment produces pain and various troubles, and everything is perishable. Withdraw the mind again and again from the objects and fix it on the Immortal Self or the picture of the Lord. When the mind attains a state of equanimity, when it is freed from distraction and Laya, do not disturb it.

You must wean the mind from the pleasure of Savikalpa Samadhi which is called Rasasvada. Rasasvada also is an obstacle. This prevents the aspirant from attaining the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Some aspirants get false contentment from attaining

this happiness and stop their Sadhana. They do not attempt to attain the Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Pseudo Samadhi

At one time, in one of my unusual journeys out of Ananda Kutir, a well-dressed gentleman sitting by my side in the railway compartment held out a sheet of newspaper to me and said: "Swamiji, do you know this Swami? He recently held a demonstration of Samadhi. He buried himself underground, in a box for full forty-two days, and came out only on the 43rd day, after the lid of the box was opened. All this happened in the presence of the Collector, Professors of University, Doctors and others." I personally had not seen a newspaper these two decades. But the matter was so interesting as to grip the mind of any intelligent thinker or even of a scientist. I then looked into the face of the inquirer and said: "Well, it is no true Samadhi. It is only Jada Samadhi; the Sadhu must have come to know of some Himalayan herb and must have tested its effect on him on many a previous occasion. For Samadhi is not a state to be demonstrated and cannot be demonstrated also. Men who have purified their hearts, men who are extremely devoted to God alone, can enter into that highest state of Yoga and such persons do not demonstrate it before the public." But the co-traveller did not seem to lose his curiosity.

At another time, some aspirant held out before me a noted weekly of India and pointed out to me the picture of a South Indian who demonstrated Samadhi for about 24 hours or so by burying himself underground.

I desire to write about another humorous instance of a youngster who came to me for Sadhana. One day he closed all the doors of his Kutir, sat inside in an ordinary Asana, and went on doing Trataka, concentration and meditation on Lord Narayana's picture. His breath automatically passed up the lower cavities of the lungs and the Sadhaka was seen sitting like

a log of wood for 24 hours. His absence at the Ashram kitchen and in the premises created some suspicion and the Ashramites thought it wise to break open the door of his Kutir when all other methods to open the doors failed and no amount of shouting could wake him up from the sleep. On opening the door he was found sitting with slight movement of breath about the nostrils, his eyelids flickering now and then, his glottis moving up and down every few seconds. No amount of noise or shouting could wake up the youngster and his whole body looked benumbed except for the above signs of life. I then suggested to one of the Ashramites to press the bridge between the eyebrows a little down so that his concentration might be lowered. This has its desired effect. The breathing became regular, the subject opened his eyes and like a Rip Van Winkle he glanced at all the corners of the room. In his daily activities, I could hardly find even a tinge of Satchitananda aspect either in his talk or in his ways, or in his manners. This instance, I am forced to quote here, to make the reader understand that this youngster too can start such demonstrations for a few hours by getting himself buried in a box.

Sometimes the man enters into a cataleptic stage, a state of suspended animation during which all the normal indications of life are suspended. The unconscious body is laid down on the sharp edges of two scythe blades, one at his shoulders and the other beneath his ankles. Then a large block of stone weighing more than a hundredweight is placed on top of him and pounded to pieces with a sledge hammer. When the body is removed there is no sign of a cut or bruise. Sometimes arrows are struck through his body just above the heart until they protrude at the opposite side. His throat is pierced with a knife and his chest is pierced by a dagger. When the weapons are withdrawn there is no sign of a wound. He is able to make the wounds bleed or stop bleeding at will. Such amazing feats may cause wonder in the spectators. But such feats have nothing to do with real Yoga. It is not a sign or indication that the Yogi has reached the highest

peak of perfection or realisation. A real Yogi can do such marvellous feats, but generally pseudo Yogins perform such feats through jugglery. A real Yogi will never come forward to demonstrate such feats in public.

At one time some Sannyasins in Varanasi took into their mind to test a Yogi. They had heard of him as one who had been into Samadhi and knowing the Sastras themselves that the knower of Brahman knows everything, they went to test him. The Yogi rightly stood the test. The Sannyasins asked him to show the way of making a shoe. The Yogin showed them the method of stitching by biting the thread etc., and rightly demonstrated the way of a shoemaker. It should be remembered here that the Yogin was not a shoemaker himself in his Purvashrama nor can it be said that he had observed the method of repairing a shoe so minutely. They asked him "What is the taste of faecal matter"? He replied "It tastes like onion." Then they took a herb from the forest and asked him its name; use, etc. He at once gave them a right answer. These instances I would not have quoted here but to prove that one who has truly entered into Samadhi has the knowledge of all subjects and that too in detail. He knows all-languages and can talk in any language. He understands any language. He knows all sciences. That is the reason why in the Upanishads it is said "*Kasminnu bhagavo vijanate sarvamidam vijnatam bhavati*"—what is that O Bhagavan which being known all this becomes known? He should also know the past, present and the future for he has transcended the three states and the fourth state—the Turiya—also he has seen.

Samadhi is the highest fruit of Yoga. Through self-purification, through eradication of all evil habits and Samskaras, through the cultivation of good and virtuous qualities, through the practice of Yama and Niyama, Asanas, regulated Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana and Dhyana resembling the steady flame of the candle, a pious Sadhaka tries to have a glimpse of Samadhi which, through repeated attempts, becomes a daily occurrence to him and then he gradually begins to feel

an inner joy to devote the early morning hours to drink its ambrosial sweetness and then comes down to the common plane to do his normal duties. When he thus advances he prolongs his life too with it. And when he feels that he has lived enough on this plane, he desires himself to enter into it once for all never to return back to the living abode of mortals. His breath gets stuck into the nerves of the brain (Brahmarandhra) and the body becomes completely lifeless. Left to itself the body gradually decays. That is why it is the usual custom in some parts of the country to strike the head of a Sannyasin with coconut and break the skull before the body is buried in a mausoleum. For it is commonly believed and a fact too that Sannyasins practise Samadhi and their final passing away is termed as entering into Maha Samadhi or Highest Samadhi.

The reader must bear in mind that Samadhi is the culmination point in the spiritual quest of man. Just as the wealth of the mines of Golconda cannot be assessed, the spiritual wealth of this supreme state too cannot be assessed by anybody. It is a state by entering which daily the fortunate Sadhaka tries to get into it more and more. It is the Akshaya state—the state of deathlessness.

Prasnottari on Samadhi

Query

“To have good meditation or contact with the inner world, if you are obliged to go into Samadhi, then your normal consciousness will remain always the same without changing. In other words, people who have the higher consciousness only in deep meditation, once they come out of it, are not worth more than what they were before.”

I do not know what you think of this statement.

I had all along believed, and even now believe that Samadhi and contact with the higher reaches of consciousness do affect naturally and influence the whole of our consciousness,

outer as well as inner, and a personality does not continue to be the same after it has contact with its own higher consciousness either in deep meditation or in Samadhi.

This statement seems to run counter to this opinion.

If deep meditation and Samadhi do not by themselves bring about a change for the better in the ordinary and general consciousness of a person, it means there is no self-transcendence during these experiences but only self-forgetfulness, as in sleep or while under the influence of narcotic drugs. I am inclined to believe that while self-forgetfulness is mechanical and therefore brings us back to the same condition from which we went into self-forgetfulness, meditation and Samadhi take us beyond ourselves to higher reaches of consciousness and therefore to self-transcendence and they do bring about by themselves some changes for the better in the personality.

I would very much like you to enlighten me on this point.

Answer

Such doubts and conflicting notions as have been put down are really due to a somewhat loose and generalised use of the term 'Samadhi'. Even in Yoga treatises this word Samadhi is at times used in two distinct ways.

When specially used in the highest sense of the term, Samadhi implies the serene state of transcendental superconsciousness wherein the sage has the Experience Absolute. When used in a lower generalised sense, the term Samadhi implies either a definite period of continuous unbroken deep meditation, or the total absorption of one's consciousness in the Lakshya or the object meditated upon. Thus, when this object is any one of the inner Chakras (other than Sahasrara), or any one of the lower categories or Tattva (other than Atman), then the ensuing Samadhi is not necessarily the high superconscious state of self-transcendence. Certainly, even this is not mere self-forgetfulness or sleep, yet nonetheless, these Samadhis are not the same as the Experience 'Absolute. For instance, in the commen-

tary on the Hatha Yoga Pradipika you have a specific time calculation by which a unit of Samadhi is reckoned. If the meditator keeps up an unbroken flow of deep meditation to that extent, then he is referred to as having experienced Samadhi. Used in this sense, it does not imply the attainment of Atma-Jnana or Aparoksha Anubhuti which alone can make a man a transformed being.

The above will make it quite clear to you the reason for the confusion that arises in this connection. A Yogi or Sadhaka who goes into deep meditation, even to the stage of Samadhi, as per the lower calculation just described, does not really have Atma-Sakshatkara. In such a case, one may not find a complete transformation of his entire consciousness but when the Yogi (through constant repeated practice of Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi) pierces the veil of Maya or Avarana and attains the stupendous experience of sublime Atmic consciousness, then it is a mistake to say that the "normal consciousness will remain always the same without changing." The Yogi who has reached the highest experience in deep Samadhi is no more the same man he was before. He returns forth an illumined being. Of course, he may not act in any specially peculiar or extraordinary manner. But, nonetheless, there will certainly be a subtle change, a definite transformation of his total normal consciousness. This may not be immediately sensed by all and sundry who come into contact with him. But, nevertheless, this change for the better in the ordinary and general consciousness of the person is definitely there.

Used in the highest sense, Samadhi is neither self-forgetfulness nor sleep. It is a powerful state of transcendental Self-Awareness. One who comes down from it may live and move about in the same ordinary way as before and there may not be any strikingly perceptible change in his extraordinary life and behaviour to the casual beholder. But all the same, the change in his consciousness is undeniably there. What to say of

mere change; there will be positive transformation in the personality.

Query

Samadhi is of not much use unless the person concerned uses it for the purpose of the progress of his outer consciousness. It is like a Ganga-bather who is quite all right when bathing but his old and dirty clothes await him on the shore.

Is this the state of things?

Answer

'Samadhi is not of much use' in the absence of progress in the outer consciousness as well is correct only with reference to lower types of Samadhi and the Jada-avastha of the Hatha Yogi. Here the Yogi has not yet attained the highest Brahma Jnana or Supreme Kaivalya. But the opinion is incorrect if applied with reference to the highest Advaita Nirvikalpa or Nirbij Asamprajnata Samadhi. One who is established in this becomes a transfigured being. Both his inner and outer consciousness are exalted. With the attainment of the highest Nirvikalpa Samadhi, there is progress simultaneously in the outer consciousness also. This is the state of a Jivanmukta, who is in Sahaja Avastha. Gold remains gold even if it is wrapped up in a rag. The perfected consciousness of a sage even when he comes down into the field of normal activity, remains unaltered and unsullied. It is not affected. Entering into and engaging in normal Vyavahara of Jagrat Avastha cannot in the least bit affect such a sage established in Sahaja Avastha.

The attainment of Samadhi is never futile or without use. The greatest benefit that an individual can bestow upon mankind is to attain Self-realisation and spiritual perfection. By this he contributes in a tangible and a most vital and substantial manner to the evolution of the total consciousness of human race upon earth. This is the Truth.

There is, however, a view held by some that the active outward manifestation (for the benefit of the vast mankind) of this exalted inward superconsciousness is essential if this lofty attainment, i.e., Samadhi, is considered to be of any real use. This is a question of points of view. Kindly note, however, that when a sage becomes established in Samadhi, progress of his outer consciousness also automatically follows this attainment. The inward perfection cannot but express itself as a distinct transformation in the outer consciousness also. Later, a stage is reached when the inner and the outer consciousness partake of the very same quality with hardly any difference between the two. This is the state of Sahaja Samadhi.

The illustration of the Ganga-bather and his return to the bank does not seem to be quite so appropriate. Rather, the experience is to be likened unto the contact of a piece of iron with the philosopher's stone. The result is essential and enduring. However, certain traits of the Yogi's normal human personality may still be present in him during the ordinary intercourse with men, but certainly none of these will ever be such as would contradict in the slightest degree the sublime quality of his spiritual experience.

This exalted state of superconsciousness is a matter for actual personal experience. This is the true aim in life. Perfect Vairagya and intense spiritual Sadhana alone can lead to Realisation.

Chapter Five

SOME YOGIC EXPERIENCES

Experiences of a Yogi

When the fivefold quality of Yoga, arising from earth, water, fire, air and ether, has been produced, then the Yogi is endowed with body made strong by the fire of Yoga and so he will not be affected by disease, old age and death.

The quality of each element, i.e., smell of earth, taste of water, sound of ether, form of fire, touch of air, is the Yogaguna. By fixing the mind on the tip of the nose the Yogi experiences divine supersensuous smell (Divya Gandha). By fixing the mind on the tip of the tongue, he experiences divine taste; by fixing the mind on the forepart of palate, he experiences divine taste; by fixing the mind on the palate, he experiences divine colour; by fixing the mind on the middle of the tongue, a divine touch, a divine sound. The mind is steadied by means of these divine experiences because it is not attracted by the external objects.

The Yogi obtains an adamantine body (Vajrakaya) through the practice of Pranayama, concentration and Yogic Kriyas. He can keep it as long as he likes. Yogi Changdev of Maharashtra kept his body for 1400 years.

Four Classes of Yogins

There are four classes of Yogins. (1) Prathamakalpika—He is just a beginner or a neophyte. The light is just appearing. He has not attained any Siddhis. He is just practising Savitarka Samadhi. (2) Madhu Bhumika—One who has entered Nirvitarka Samadhi and who has attained Ritambhara Prajna (intuition). This stage is also called Madhumati, because it

brings such knowledge as gives satisfaction, just as honey does. (3) Prajna Jyotis—The Yogi who has attained mastery over the elements and senses. This Yogi cannot be moved or tempted by the invitations of celestial beings even. He has attained the stage of Madhu-Pratika; (4) Atikranta-bhavaniya—This Yogi has attained the Bhumikas (stages of Visoka and Samskara-sesha). He has attained Kaivalya or full independence.

The Raja Yogi can get all Siddhis without Samyama by Pratibha only (by spontaneous illumination through purity). Prasankhyanam is the highest illumination through Viveka Khyati or full discrimination between Purusha and Prakriti.

Siddhis cause positive hindrance to wisdom or the attainment of Self-realisation. They deter and obstruct the aspirant in his march towards the goal. They do not produce perfect non-attachment. That is the reason why Patanjali Maharshi, the author of Raja Yoga, again and again says that the Yogic student should kill the desire for acquiring Siddhis. If he runs towards Siddhis, he will be caught in a big maze and it will be almost impossible for him to get out of the maze. He will misuse the power and get a hopeless fall.

The mind should be perfectly purified. Then only the vessel or the mechanism will be fit to receive the descent of the Divine Light. It should be sufficiently strong to bear the pressure of a sudden expansion of consciousness or cosmic-vision which is above the mind and which covers the whole existence in one sweep of his new exalted magnanimous experience. Therefore wait patiently if there is delay in the descent of the Divine Light. Grow in purity and strength.

Somapana (Amrita Srava)

Soma means moon in Sanskrit. Drinking of the nectar which comes from the moon is called Soma Pana. Soma juice or cooling nectar is situated in the lower portion of the skull at the root of the palate. The taste of this juice is very palatable and

various juices are produced during the practice. One gets new sensations. First, one experiences a saltish taste, then alkaline, then bitter, then astringent. With further practices he gets the taste of butter, milk, ghee, curds, honey, palm juice and lastly the taste of nectar. The last one has got a taste which one cannot express in words as there is nothing to compare with the things of the world. So it is called Nectar. This nectar is tasted by keeping the tongue in the root of the soft palate. To get maximum benefit one should try to lengthen the tongue by milking it daily. Then it is folded and kept at the root of the palate with concentrated mind and restraining the breath. This is called 'Nabho Mudra.' When the tongue enters the hole in the palate, great heat is caused in the body. The effect of this is to make the ambrosial stream flow from the root of the palate. This juice is also known as Amara Varuni.

It is said in "Hatha Yoga Pradeepika" 45th Sloka in the third Chapter the benefit of the drinking of Soma Juice.

"Those Yogins whose body is filled with nectar daily, flowing from the moon which is situated at the root of the palate, even the poison of the serpent Takshaka does not spread throughout his body." The poison cannot affect his system.

"Just like the fire does not go out so long as there is fire-wood, and the light of the lamp does not go so long as there is oil and wick, so also the Jiva remains in the body as long as it is vivified by the rays of the moon." (Sloka 46) H.P. III.

"The Yogi who, with upturned face or through the practice of Viparita Karani Mudra and closing the hole of the palate by twisting the tongue backwards, meditates upon the Sakti (Kundalini) and drinks the nectar of the moon in the head which flows into the sixteen-petalled lotus situated in the throat (Visuddha Chakra) becomes freed from all diseases, and lives long with a body soft and beautiful as the fibres of a lotus-stem."

The moon is situated in the root of the palate and nectar which flows from the moon is dried up by the sun which is situ-

ated in the navel. For checking this, Viparita Karani Mudra is practised.

Viparita Karani Mudra is just like Sarvangasana. The difference between Sarvangasana and Viparita Karani is, in Sarvangasana the chin is pressed with chest and body is straight from the neck onward and in Viparita Karani pressure is not given at the neck. Place the head on the ground and raise the legs up. Keep the hands spread on the ground and remain steady. This is called Viparita Karani which prevents the nectar being dried up in the solar plexus situated in the navel.

Both the Nabho Mudra and Viparita Karani are very easy to practise. Viparita Karani is not practised in the evening.

Yogi Drinks Nectar

Agnimandal, the region of the fire, is below the navel; the Suryamandal, the region of the Sun, is in and above the heart; the Chandramandal, the region of the moon, is in and above the head.

Amritam or nectar oozes out in large quantities from the Chandramandal, the brain of the Yogi. The Yogi assimilates it in his system and keeps alive almost infinitely without partaking of any other food or drink.

The nectar that flows from the Chandramandal in the head is consumed by the fire in the Agnimandal in the navel. By practising Sarvangasana and Viparita Karani Mudra the nectar nourishes the whole system. One attains long life. Agnimandal is turned upwards now. The fire cannot consume the nectar.

Experices of a Bhakta

The flame of divine love burns in the heart of the thirsting devotee day and night. The devotee never cares for his food and drink. He is emaciated. He pines away from the separation of the Lord. He does not sleep at night. He does not know when the Lord will give Darshan. So he keeps vigil the whole night. He

does not care for the sarcastic remarks of the world. He pours forth his love on the Lord.

Sometimes the devotee feels the acute pang of separation from the Lord. He feels as if he is roasted in a hot pan over the furnace. Immediately the divine nectar dribbles. Then he feels as if he has taken a plunge in the cool waters of the Ganga.

The devotee cannot bear the separation from the Lord even for a second. A second appears to him as one year. When there is this feeling his eyes become vacant and face becomes blank. There is a burning sensation in the heart. The devotee is restless. He sheds profuse tears. Then his thirst is quenched a bit.

The relish of permanent joy that characterises the divine ecstatic state when the devotee feels the presence of God is known as Rasa. Bhava is the main basis of Rasa. It is the bliss potency of the Lord Himself. It lies in a subtle, unmanifested state within the individual soul. Vibhava is the cause or extension of Rasa. Anubhava is the effect of Rasa. Stupefaction, horripilation and the like which constitute the Sattvic Bhava are the specific effects of Rasa.

The nature and essence of Bhava are Pure Chitta. The mind of the devotee is reduced to a state of pure Chitta owing to the constant practice of devotion. The eight Sattvic Bhavas are Stambha (paralysis), Sveda (perspiration), Romancha (horripilation), Svarabhanga (hoarseness of the voice), Vepathu (trembling), Vaivarnya (change of colour), Ashru (tears), and Pralaya (loss of consciousness).

Inner Voice

Einstein said that he would still his mind and listen to the inner voice, and would hear the inner answer. The listening is not tenseness but relaxation. It is a passivity, a state akin to sleep, and yet you are far from being sleepy. The conscious mind is partially submerged. Effort is reduced to a minimum. It is a controlled and a disciplined state of mind. All great musi-

cians such as Mozart and others listened to the inner voice. Emerson says in his writings that all his works were created from the outset and all that he did was to still his mind on the Holy Presence, thinking of God, and listening to the voice of the Spirit and then thoughts came into his mind, and he wrote them down. He refers to this procedure as listening to the "primal warblings."

State of Spiritual Illumination

The real nature of Brahma-Jnana or superconsciousness remains a mystery until one experiences it.

Illumination is Nirvikalpa Samadhi or union of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul.

Illumination is cosmic consciousness or Christ Consciousness or Nirvana or Beatific.

It is most difficult to explain this state of illumination in definite and precise words because language is finite and imperfect.

In this exalted state the senses and the mind cease functioning.

The Yogi will have to experience it directly through intuition and Samadhi.

He who has no fear of death is fit for illumination.

He alone can attain the Superconscious state.

The Yogi who wants to enter into Samadhi must have a sharp, subtle and one-pointed intellect, good physique, good health, discrimination, dispassion, serenity and burning yearning for liberation.

The seeker who dedicates his life to the attainment of Supreme Knowledge should practise the fourfold Sadhana.

Meditative life is a journey over the unknown path which is as strait and narrow as a razor. There is no other light but that

of faith to guide the seeker, no sustenance but devotion, Guru's Grace and Grace of the Lord.

The track cannot be seen, going is uncertain, and pitfalls await the unwary. The seeker must travel in the dark. He must not cry for a torch-light to grope in the gloom, or seek the flash-light of reason. He must go steadily forward in the hope of reaching a great illumination, which awaits him at the journey's end. It is a way of life. It cannot be comprehended but it can be realised.

It is difficult to attain the Superconscious state. It may come in a minute or six months for a first-class type of aspirant. It may take years or even lives. *Nil desperandum*. March forward, Adhyatmic hero!

Through the fourfold discipline, the seeker after Truth develops an austere detachment towards the empirical world.

He who has attained illumination or superconsciousness is absolutely free from all sorts of fear. He is born anew. He is completely transformed into a godman. He has double consciousness. He rests in Brahman. He beholds the world within himself and works for the solidarity of the world.

A sage of illumined state has a changed outlook. There is nothing outside for him. He beholds the entire universe within himself. The cosmic sense or the eye of wisdom is awakened in him.

He who is illumined becomes speechless. He is unable to explain his experience. Through silence he clears the doubts of people.

A sage never loses consciousness of Atman, whatever his physical personality may be engaged in. A small remnant of Avidya or ignorance carries on the functions of body and mind, but the sage or knower does not identify himself with it, and it soon withers away like a tree that has lost its roots.

In his mere presence people feel that they are in the presence of a godman, a divine personality, without his speaking a word. His face is angelic. It radiates brilliance, joy and peace. His eyes are lustrous. His speech is sweet and inspiring.

The wise man (illumined sage) has neither wealth nor property. He has neither bungalows nor cars; yet he attracts the whole world through his wisdom and spiritual power. He is a marvellous spiritual magnet. His spiritual wealth is inexhaustible. Glory to such a wise man of superconsciousness.

Chapter Six

KUNDALINI SAKTI

Prayer to Mother Kundalini

Wake up Mother Kundalini.

Those whose nature is Bliss Eternal—The Bliss of Brahman.
Thou dwelling like a serpent asleep at the lotus of Muladhara.
Sure affected and distressed am I in body and mind,
Do Thou bless me and leave Thy place at the basic lotus.
Consort of Siva, the Self-caused Lord of Universe.
Do Thou take Thy upward course through the central canal.
Leaving behind Svadhishthana, Manipura, Anahata, Vishuddha,
And Ajna, be Thou united with Siva, Thy Lord the God.
At Sahasrara—the thousand-petalled lotus in the brain.
Sport there freely, O Mother, Giver of Bliss Supreme.
Mother, who art Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute.
Wake up, Mother Kundalini, Wake up.

Experiences on Awakening of Kundalini

During meditation you behold divine visions, experience divine smell, divine taste, divine touch, hear divine Anahata sounds. You receive instructions from God. These indicate that the Kundalini Sakti has been awakened. When there is throbbing in Muladhara, when hair stands on its root, when Uddiyana, Jalandhara and Mulabandha come involuntarily, know that Kundalini has awokened.

When the breath stops without any effort, when Kevala Kumbhaka comes by itself without any exertion, know that Kundalini Sakti has become active. When you feel currents of Prana rising up to the Sahasrara, when you experience bliss, when you repeat Om automatically, when there are no thoughts

of the world in the mind, know that Kundalini Sakti has awokened.

When in your meditation the eyes become fixed on Trikuti, the middle of the eyebrows, when the Sambhavi Mudra operates, know that Kundalini has become active. When you feel vibrations of Prana in different parts inside your body, when you experience jerks like the shocks of electricity, know that Kundalini has become active. During meditation when you feel as if there is no body, when your eyelids become closed and do not open in spite of your exertion, when electric-like currents flow up and down the nerves, know that Kundalini has awokened.

When you meditate, when you get inspiration and insight, when nature unfolds its secrets to you, all doubts disappear, you understand clearly the meaning of the Vedic texts, know that Kundalini has become active. When your body becomes light like air, when you have a balanced mind in perturbed condition, when you possess inexhaustible energy for work, know that Kundalini has become active.

When you get divine intoxication, when you develop power of oration, know that Kundalini has awokened. When you involuntarily perform different Asanas or poses of Yoga without the least pain or fatigue, know that Kundalini has become active. When you compose beautiful sublime hymns and poetry involuntarily, know that Kundalini has become active.

The Gradational Ascent of the Mind

The Chakras are centres of Sakti as vital force. In other words, these are centres of Pranasakti manifested by Pranavayu in the living body, the presiding Devatas of which are the names for the Universal Consciousness as It manifests in the form of these centres. The Chakras are not perceptible to the gross senses. Even if they were perceptible in the living body which

they help to organise, they disappear with the disintegration of organism at death.

Purity of mind leads to perfection in Yoga. Regulate your conduct when you deal with others. Have no feeling of jealousy towards others. Be compassionate. Do not hate sinners. Be kind to all. Success in Yoga will be rapid if you put your maximum energy in your Yogic practice. You must have a keen longing for liberation and intense Vairagya also. You must be sincere and earnest. Intent and constant meditation is necessary for entering into Samadhi.

The mind of a worldly man with base desires and passions moves in the Muladhara and Svadhishtana Chakras or centres situated near the anus and the reproductive organ respectively.

If one's mind becomes purified the mind rises to the Manipura Chakra or the centre in the navel and experiences some power and Joy.

If the mind becomes more purified, it rises to the Anahata Chakra or centre in the heart, experiences bliss and visualises the effulgent form of the Ishta Devata or the tutelary deity.

When the mind gets highly purified, when meditation and devotion become intense and profound, the mind rises to Visuddha Chakra or the centre in the throat, and experiences more and more powers and bliss. Even when the mind has reached this centre, there is a possibility for it to come down to the lower centres.

When the Yogi reaches the Ajna Chakra or the centre between the eyebrows he attains Samadhi and realises the supreme Self or Brahman. There is a slight sense of separateness between the devotee and Brahman.

If he reaches the spiritual centre in the brain, the Sahasrara Chakra, the thousand-petalled lotus, the Yogi attains Nirvikalpa Samadhi or superconscious state. He becomes one with the non-dual Brahman. All sense of separateness dissolves. This is

the highest plane of consciousness or supreme Asamprajnata Samadhi. Kundalini unites with Siva.

The Yogi may come down to the centre in the throat to give instructions to the students and do good to others (Lokasangraha).

Chapter Seven

PSYCHIC POWERS

Siddhis or Occult Powers

The Yogi becomes the master of all forces in Nature and can utilise them at will. He has perfect control over the elements.

Jnanins through the power of Satsankalpa can do whatever they like with their physical bodies.

The Yogi directly beholds through his Yogic inner eye the Samskaras of his disciples and knows their weaknesses and defects and prescribes the right kind of Sadhana for their quick eradication. A Jnani also can do this. Whatever a Yogi can do through his Yogic Samyama or simultaneous Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi, can be done by a Jnani through his power of Satsankalpa.

Exhibition of Siddhis is no criterion for measuring one's height of spirituality. He who exhibits Siddhi for selfish ends, is a big worldly man. He will soon have his downfall. Sometimes a Yogi may exhibit a miracle to his student just to convince him of the existence of supersensual things and to encourage him in the spiritual path.

It is stated that the Yogi attains the eight Siddhis, viz., Anima, Mahima, etc., and perfection of body by the practice of meditation.

Eight Major Psychic Powers

An accomplished Purna Yogi is in possession of eight major Siddhis, viz., Anima, Mahima, Laghima, Garima, Prapti, Prakamya, Vashitvam and Ishatvam.

1. *Anima*: The Yogi can become as minute as he pleases.
2. *Mahima*: This is the opposite of Anima. He can become as big as he likes. He can make his body assume a very large size. He can fill up the whole universe. He can assume a Virat Svarupa.
3. *Laghima*: He can make his body as light as cotton or feather. Vayustambhana is done through this Siddhi. In Jalastambhana also this power is exercised to a very small degree. The body is rendered light by Plavini Pranayama. The Yogi produces a diminution of his specific gravity by swallowing large draughts of air. The Yogi travels in the sky with the help of this Siddhi. He can travel thousands of miles in a minute.
4. *Garima*: This is the opposite of Laghima. In this Yoga he acquires an increase of specific gravity. He can make the body as heavy as a mountain by swallowing draughts of air.
5. *Prapti*: The Yogi standing on the earth can touch the highest thing. He can touch the sun or the moon or the sky. Through this Siddhi the Yogi attains his desired objects and supernatural powers. He acquires the power of predicting future events, the power of clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy, thought-reading, etc. He can understand the languages of the beasts and birds. He can understand unknown languages also. He can cure all diseases.
6. *Prakamya*: He can dive into the water and can come out at any time he likes. The late Trilinga Swami of Varanasi used to live for six months underneath the Ganga. It is the process by which the Yogi makes himself invisible sometimes. By some writers it is defined to be the power of entering the body of another (Parakaya Pravesha). Sri Sankara entered the body of Raja Amara of Varanasi. Tirumular in Southern India entered the body of a shepherd. Raja Vikramaditya also did this. It is also the power of keeping a youthlike appearance for any length of time. Raja Yayaati had this power.

7. *Vashitvam*: This is the power of taming wild animals and bringing them under control. It is the power of mesmerising persons by the exercise of will and of making them obedient to one's own wishes and orders. It is the restraint of passions and emotions. It is the power to bring men, women and the elements under subjection.

8. *Ishatvam*: It is the attainment of divine power. The Yogi becomes the Lord of the universe. The Yogi who has this power can restore life to the dead. Kabir, Tulasi Das, Akalkot Swami and others had this power of bringing back life to the dead.

Other Psychic Powers

The Yogi acquires the following minor psychic powers:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst.
2. Freedom from the effects of heat and cold.
3. Freedom from Raga-Dvesha.
4. Doora-darshan or clairvoyance or Doora-drishti.
5. Doora-sravana, clairaudience or Doora-sruti and Doora-pravachana.
6. Manojaya, control of mind.
7. Kama-rupa. The Yogi can take any form he likes.
8. Parakaya Pravesha. He can enter into another body, can animate a dead body and enter into it by transferring his soul.
9. Iccha Mrityu. Death at his will.
10. Devanam Saha Kreeda and Darshan. Playing with the Devas after seeing them.
11. Yatha Sankalpa. Can get whatever he likes.
12. Trikaala Jnana. Knowledge of past, present and future.
13. Advandva. Beyond the pairs of the opposites.
14. Vak Siddhi. Whatever the Yogi predicts will come to pass by the practice of Satya, prophecy.

15. The Yogi can turn base metals into gold.
16. Kaya Vyuha. Taking as many bodies as the Yogi likes to exhaust all his Karmas in one life.
17. Darduri Siddhi. The jumping power of a frog.
18. Patala Siddhi. The Yogi becomes the Lord of desires, destroys sorrows and diseases.
19. He gets knowledge of his past life.
20. He gets knowledge of the cluster of stars and planets.
21. He gets the power of perceiving the Siddhis.
22. He gets mastery of the elements (Bhuta Jaya) and mastery of Prana (Prana Jaya).
23. Kamachari. He can move to any place he likes.
24. He gets omnipotence and omniscience.
25. Vayu Siddhi. The Yogi rises in the air; leaves the ground.
26. He can point out the place where a hidden treasure lies.

Levitation or Vayu Siddhi

Numerous aspirants are drawn towards the practice of Yoga, specially Hatha Yoga or Kundalini Yoga, by the thought of the extraordinary powers they are likely to acquire through it. The idea of possessing such powers seems to exercise a strange fascination on very many young people both of the East and the West. An earnest and diligent practice of Yoga with the rigid discipline and perseverance, no doubt, brings in its wake unusual powers and apparently strange experiences, but these Siddhis, minor or major, it must be remembered, do not constitute the essential and true Yoga in the deepest sense of the term. They are not to be taken for the goal. But rather they are the indicators of the stage reached. They are indicators of the prog-

ress the practitioner has made. They serve to give him his bearings even as milestones show to the traveller where he is.

Levitation is an experience the Yogi comes to have when he begins to attain perfection in Pranayama. When the Prana begins to move in the central Nadi or the Sushumna, levitation occurs. Levitation happens when the Yogi has succeeded in retaining the Pranic energy within the Sushumna, which is situated in the spinal column. In the beginning, the Pranic energy may just enter and leave the Sushumna. It does not remain there. However, through the combined operation of Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha and will-power, the Yogi gradually forces the energy to remain within the Sushumna. The practitioner makes use of auto-suggestion also in this process. When he succeeds in thus retaining the Prana in the Sushumna, then the body leaves the ground and rises in the air. The Yoga texts mention the three stages through which the practitioner passes in attaining levitation. As he progresses in Pranayama, he first experiences profuse perspiration of the body. Next, he attains a state when there is experience of tremors in the body. This is specially felt along the course of the spine. When the third stage is reached, the body leaves the ground and moves in the air.

The first inkling that the practitioner gets as he nears this stage is the peculiar sensation of rising from the ground. This sensation he feels even when actually he is still on the ground. When the Prana is forcibly retained through will-power, strong imagination, auto-suggestion, as well as Pranayama with Bandha, the retained Prana begins to rise upward. Then, together with the peculiar feeling the Yogi actually leaves and rises from the ground.

Levitation is brought about by combination of several factors. The main factor is the extraordinary lightness attained by the body when the Prana enters the Sushumna and is confined therein. This extreme lightness is actually felt by the Yogi. He feels like a feather. His lightness makes him rise from the

ground. Secondly, at this stage of the Pranayama, the Kundalini is activated. The upward surge of the Kundalini Sakti propels along with it the body, which in its extremely lightened condition, offers very little resistance. A third factor is the powerful radiation which is set up from the Kundalini at the Muladhara Centre. These forceful radiations which take place at this time due to the awakened Kundalini being powerfully stimulated by the Pranic energy go out in all directions. The direct downward radiations hit the earth as it were and have the effect of giving an upward push to the Yogi's body. These radiations are invisible but tangible to the experience of the practitioner. Their action is felt to be somewhat similar to the backward kick that the explosive charge in a rocket gives and which pushes the rocket up forcibly. The radiations act in such an effective manner particularly due to the fact that the body is rendered almost weightless at this stage. The weightless condition of the body, combined with the upward propulsion of the Kundalini together with the push of its radiations—all result in its overcoming the operation of gravity.

For attaining Vayu Siddhi one should be a whole-timed practitioner of Pranayama. He should practise 3 times daily Anuloma Viloma Pranayama 40 rounds in each sitting regularly without break, for several months or years. This will purify the Nadis and make it easier for the Prana to move within the central canal or Sushumna. Then with the further practice of Bhastrika together with the Bandhas raises the Prana in the Sushumna. Again through the concentration and Bandhas the movement of Prana is restricted in the Sushumna.

During the practice one should live on milk and fruits or a kind of rice and milk diet only. The practitioner should avoid too much walking, or pilgrimage or too much exertion of any kind, too much sleeping, eating Rajasic and Tamasic types of foods, basking in the sun, sitting near the fire, taking cold bath and fasting completely. Strict Brahmacharya should be maintained.

When Vayu Siddhi is attained, the practitioner has reached the stage of Pratyahara.

Instructions from a practical guide are always necessary even though the guide may not be near the student. In the absence of a practical guide or when one cannot get in touch with his master, he should pray to God or his Guru for enlightenment and removing obstacles.

Faith in the Yoga Sastras and Guru is very essential. Otherwise, when one cannot find the required results, he leaves off Yoga stating it to be humbug.

Patience and perseverance are the next important points for success in Yoga. One should lead a life of purity and dedicate his entire actions to the Lord.

Kaya Sampat

By the process of Hatha Yoga, the Yogi attains a perfect physical body—*Rupalavanga bala vajrasamhanana kaya sampat*. “The perfection of the body consists in beauty, grace, strength and adamantine hardness.” The power to bear extreme cold and heat (Titiksha), the power to live without water and food and other powers come under the category of Kaya Sampat (perfection of body).

Since the body of the Hatha Yogi is perfect and firm, his mind also is firm and one-pointed. By the practice of Dharana and Dhyana, he reaches the highest rung in the Yogic ladder and attains Immortality through Yogic Samadhi. The Yogi who has reached the highest stage will have all kinds of occult powers.

Comments on Some Occult Phenomena

Queries

(1) There was very recently an English lady, 70 years old, here in Ranchi. She had taken Sannyasa from that sect which takes the title of Puri at the end of new names that are given at the time of Sannyasa.

Her name is... She was subject to some visions etc., when she was in England. She came over to India on the eve of the Second World War on a caution that came to her (that England would be in danger) in a half-dream-vision-like thing. After coming here she took Sannyasa.

With her was staying a person who was a poker in his occupation before coming here. He too was an Englishman but he was subject to trances. Whenever there was a sitting, if questions were asked of him, he would always give replies highly philosophical and spiritual in character. While replies were being given, they were taken down verbatim by the Sannyasini. Since the replies were brief or not very long, she herself wrote down explanations and comments. The whole thing has developed into something like 80 pages of this kind of question and reply. She says that what she calls 'Brothers' speak through him. Much of what he says during those trances is Upanishadic thought very well and clearly put, though briefly.

(2) As late as a month and a half before, I was in Bombay. There was a person called Sri.... When requested by a friend of mine there, I wrote down three questions on a piece of paper, rolled it up and just let down on a half sheet which was spread. He was sitting just in front of us. He did not touch either the half sheet or the piece that I had rolled and thrown on it. Within about 10 to 15 minutes, without moving from where he was or doing anything out of the way, he wrote down on another slip of paper all the three questions exactly word to word as I had written them, and also the replies. He did the same with another set of questions which my friend wrote down and presented in a similar manner.

(3) There was another gentleman who was a villager and did not know anything of modern education. When questions were asked, he would fix his gaze a little and would look very much absent-minded and immediately give replies as if he had seen them vividly. The questions need not be clear at all but to

those vague questions he would give concrete replies which would tally exactly with the details of the questions which were in our mind.

I hope that you may be able to shed some light on these phenomena.

Answers

Such phenomena are not very unusual with Yogins and Bhaktas who are living a life of spiritual Sadhana and Yoga. These have been witnessed by different people in almost all countries at various times, past as well as present. But they are not common among all such people, if you mean by that term (common) the general majority of persons engaged in spiritual life.

They are occult phenomena and they have not much to do with real spiritual illumination and Realisation. The presence of such phenomena does not necessarily indicate that the persons concerned possess spiritual Realisation. But, of course, it is quite possible that such occult phenomena may accompany inward Realisation as well. There is nothing to prevent a spiritually illumined being possessing or even demonstrating such mysterious or 'miraculous' things. However, most spiritual persons choose not to manifest these occult processes, for definite reasons of their own.

(1) From what I have stated above just now, you may be able to draw your own conclusions regarding the Sannyasini and her friend. It is quite possible that this old Swamiji might have practised Yoga in the previous Janma and thus born with her inherent psychic faculties awakened and active since childhood. Spirit communication is not spiritual Realisation. Thought-forms issuing from the higher astral plane can be highly philosophical and subtle. Of course, replies and instructions given by means of such occult phenomenon are not, all of them, absolutely useless. There may be much in them that is useful to people in general and to seekers as well. Sometimes

such utterances do issue from the trance-person's own subconscious depths, where this knowledge, previously acquired, lies embedded as hidden Samskaras.

(2) The phenomenon recently witnessed by you in Bombay is just thought-transference or thought reading. It is simple telepathy. This is common.

(3) From the brief reference made in the case of the village gentleman, it seems to me to be something in the nature of either Mantra Siddhi or successful Upasana of some Devata. In South India, particularly in the West Coast region, cases of such Upasana and Siddhi have been frequently noted. In the particular case, the venerable person is either a person of some spiritual attainment or one who has acquired this occult Siddhi as a result of some peculiar Upasana or Mantra Siddhi. In such cases the replies are usually prompted by the Upasya-devata. Sometimes the Devata speaks through the person. Here however, such communication does not require a trance-condition of the person. It occurs even when the person is in normal condition. Just a little concentration may be done (as noted by) to invoke the reply. Perhaps the person might request for perfect silence on the part of those near about him. That is all.

There is a vast range of multiple-varied stages and stages of experience in between the gross, body-bound, ignorance-riden worldly man and the fully illumined perfected sage of transcendental knowledge. Not a few of these intervening states tend to draw away the unknowing seeker from his quest. Knowing them to be what they are, reverencing all, the humble seeker extremely vigilant and intent upon his quest should ceaselessly endeavour to reach the Truth.

Samyama Leads to Occult Powers

The three (Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi) together constitute Samyama.

The three are more internal than Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama and Pratyahara.

Even that (Samyama) is external to the seedless Samadhi.

By the conquest of Samyama comes the stage of cognition.

By Samyama on the sun comes the knowledge of the worlds.

By Samyama on the moon comes the knowledge of the regions of stars.

By Samyama on the pole star, comes the knowledge of the movements of the stars.

By Samyama on the strength of elephants and others, comes their strength.

By Samyama on the form of the body, the power of comprehension being checked, and the connection between the eye and light being severed, comes the disappearance of the body.

By Samyama on the signs (of others) comes the knowledge of their minds.

By Samyama on a small point of time comes the discriminative knowledge.

By Samyama on the relation of the ear and ether, comes the divine hearing.

By Samyama on the relation between ether and body, to the Yogi attaining the lightness of cotton, comes the power of the passage through ether (air).

By Samyama on the three modifications of mind, comes the knowledge of the past and future.

By Samyama and direct perception of the Samskaras (impressions of mind) comes the knowledge of the previous birth.

By Samyama on the power of cognition the essential own nature, egoism, qualities and purposefulness or condition of senses, comes the mastery over senses (organs).

Then comes to the body the power of quick movement like the mind and perception with the Indriyas (senses) and mastery over nature.

By acquiring mastery over Udana Vayu, the Yogi will not have any contact with water, mud, thorns and others, and can die at will.

By mastery over Samana Vayu, comes effulgence.

By Samyama on friendliness and other virtues comes the power to transmit the same to others.

By Samyama on the distinctive relation between Sattva (Purity) and Purusha (the Soul) comes the powers of omnipotence and omniscience.

By Samyama on (the distinctions of) the word, meaning and knowledge which are confused with one another and appear as one because of similarity, comes the knowledge of the sounds of all living beings.

Karma (work) is of two kinds, viz., those that are to be fructified and those that will bring fruits slowly (at a later date).

By Samyama over these or by portents, the Yogi gets the knowledge of (the time of) his death.

By Samyama on the Chakra (plexus) or navel, comes the knowledge of the body.

By Samyama on the Chakra at the pit of the throat, comes the removal of hunger and thirst.

By Samyama on the light of the head, comes the Darshan of Siddhas.

By Samyama on the heart, comes the knowledge of the mind.

By Samyama on the Kurma Nadi, comes the steadiness of the body.

By Samyama on the inner light (of the heart) comes the knowledge of the subtle, the obscured and the remote.

Experience comes from the absence of discrimination between Sattva and Purusha that are absolutely distinct from each other. This (enjoyment) being for another (Purusha) knowledge of Purusha comes by Samyama on himself.

From that (Samyama) arises the knowledge of clairaudience, higher taste and higher smell through intuition.

By the power of intuition comes the knowledge of all knowledge.

The mind (of a Yogi) enters another body by relaxation of the cause of bondage and by the knowledge of the method of passing.

By Samyama on the gross form, substantive nature, subtle form, qualities and purposefulness of the elements comes mastery over the elements.

From that comes the attainment of the (eight major) Siddhis, Anima, etc., and the perfection of body and non-obstruction of their functions.

The perfection of body is (when it has) beauty, gracefulness, strength and adamantine hardness.

These Siddhis are obstacles in attaining Samadhi, but they are for the outgoing mind.

By giving up even these (Siddhis) comes the destruction of the seed of bondage which brings Kaivalya (independence).

The Yogi should give up attachment and smile or happiness when the celestial beings invite as there are again the possibilities of contacting with undesirables.

Chapter Eight

SIGNS OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

Song of Spiritual Progress

Cheerfulness, contentment, calmness,
Dispassion, detachment, fearlessness,
Equanimity, fixity, non-irritability,
Serenity, tranquillity, unperturbability;
Santi, Santosh, silence,
Peace, poise, perfection;
Nishtha Bhava, Maha Bhava, Prema,
Horripilation, tears, tremor, Svara-bhang;
Anahata sounds, lights, visions,
Ecstasy, rapture, joy;
Ritambhara, Madhumati, Prajna, Jyotis,
Inspiration, illumination, revelation,
Intoxication, insight, intuition;
These are the signs of Kundalini awakening,
These are the marks of spiritual progress.
These are the spiritual experiences.

Main Characteristics of Progress in Sadhana

More and more dispassion and discrimination
More and more yearning for liberation
Peace, cheerfulness, contentment
Fearlessness, unruffled state of mind
Lustre in the eyes, good smell from the body
Beautiful complexion, sweet, powerful voice
Passing of little urine and excretion
Wonderful health, vim, vigour and vitality
Freedom from disease, laziness and depression.
Lightness of body, alertness of mind

Powerful Jatharagni or digestive fire
 Eagerness to sit and meditate for long time
 Aversion to worldly talks and company of worldlings
 Feeling of presence of God everywhere
 Love for all creatures
 Feeling that all forms are of the Lord
 That the world is Lord Himself
 Absence of Ghrina or dislike to any creature
 Even to those who despise and insult you
 Strength of mind to bear insult and injury
 To meet dangers and calamities
 Are some of the preliminary spiritual experiences
 These indicate that you are steadily advancing
 In the spiritual path.
 You will have a healthy body and mind.
 The excretions will be scanty.
 The voice will be sweet.
 The face will be brilliant.
 The eyes will be lustrous.
 You will be ever calm, tranquil and poised.
 You will be ever cheerful, fearless and contented.
 You will be dispassionate and discriminative.
 There will be no attraction for the world.
 Things that used to upset you before
 Will not upset you now.
 You will have Antarmukha Vritti, introversion.
 You will have an unruffled mind.
 Things that were used to give you pleasure
 Produce disgust or a reverse effect now.
 You will have a one-pointed, sharp, subtle mind
 You will be longing to have more meditation.
 You will experience lights, visions, Divya Gandha, Divya taste.
 The idea that all forms are forms of the Lord
 Will get stronger and stronger in you.
 You will feel everywhere the presence of God.
 You will experience the nearness of God.

You will have a very steady Asana.
You will develop a burning desire for selfless service.

Other Important Characteristics

Peace, cheerfulness, contentment, dispassion, fearlessness, unperturbed state of mind under all conditions, indicate that you are advancing in the spiritual path.

Spiritual progress is not measured by Siddhis or powers but only by the depth of your bliss in meditation.

These are the sure tests of your spiritual progress.

Is your interest in inner spiritual activity and outer Sadhana increasing day after day?

Does spiritual life mean to your consciousness a matter of great delight, a delight for transcending the happiness that the world of vital pleasures affords you or offers you?

Have your personal awareness come to a possession of a sense of peace and strength which men who are not aspirants do not find in their everyday lives?

Do you feel certain that your power of discrimination and light of thought have been steadily growing?

Is your life being gradually led to such experiences which reveal to you the operation of a will and intelligence other than your own, the will and intelligence of the Omnipresent Lord?

Has there come into the conscious activities of your everyday life, the active function of a new delightful angle of vision, a new perspective, a strong sense of self-possession, steadily growing conviction of your dependence upon and intimate relation with the all-pervading Divinity? If your answers to all these questions or to any one of them are in the affirmative, be absolutely sure that you are progressing, and progressing speedily in the spiritual path.

More and more dispassion and discrimination, more and more yearning for liberation, peace, cheerfulness, contentment,

fearlessness, unruffled state of mind indicate that you are steadily advancing in the spiritual path.

Spiritual progress is indicated by lustre in the eyes, good smell from the body, beautiful complexion, sweet, powerful voice, passing of little urine and excretion, wonderful health, vim, vigour and vitality, freedom from diseases, laziness and depression, lightness of body, alertness of mind, powerful digestive fire, eagerness to sit and meditate for a long time.

There will be aversion for worldly company. There will be love for all beings, feeling that all forms are of the Lord. There will be absence of dislike for any creature, even to those who despise and insult.

There will be strength of mind to meet dangers and calamities, to bear insult and injury.

Signs of Progress in the Path of Meditation

Brahman, Self, Purusha, Chaitanya, Consciousness, God, Atman, Immortality, Freedom, Perfection, Peace, Bliss, Bhuma or the Unconditioned, are synonymous terms. If you attain Self-realisation alone, you will be freed from the round of births and deaths and its concomitant evils. The goal of life is the attainment of final beatitude or Moksha. Moksha can be attained by constant meditation with a heart that is rendered pure and steady by selfless service, Japa, etc.

Meditation is the only real royal road to the attainment of salvation. Meditation kills all pains, sufferings and sorrows. Meditation destroys all causes of sorrow. Meditation gives vision of unity. Meditation induces sense of oneness. Meditation is a balloon or a parachute or an aeroplane that helps the aspirant to soar high into the realms of eternal bliss, everlasting peace and undying joy.

Reality or Brahman can be realised by man. Many have attained Self-realisation. Many have enjoyed the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Sankara, Dattatreya, Mansoor, Shams Tabriez, Jesus,

Buddha—were all realised souls who had direct perception of the Truth or Cosmic vision or Aparokshanubhuti. But one who has known cannot communicate it to others for want of means. Even the knowledge acquired by the five senses which are common to all cannot be communicated to others. You cannot tell the taste of sugar-candy to a man who has never tasted it. You cannot communicate the idea of colour to one born blind. All that the teacher can do is to tell his disciple the method of knowing the truth or the path that leads to the unfoldment of intuitional faculty.

These are the signs that indicate that you are growing in meditation and approaching God. You will have no attraction for the world. The sensual objects will no longer tempt you. You will become desireless, fearless, ‘I’-less and ‘mine’-less. Deha-adhyasa or attachment to the body will gradually dwindle. You will not entertain the ideas, “She is my wife; he is my son; this is my house.” You will feel that all are manifestations of the Lord. You will behold God in every object.

The body and mind will become light. You will always be cheerful and happy. The name of the Lord will always be on your lips. The mind will be ever fixed at the lotus-feet of the Lord. The mind will be ever producing the image of the Lord. It will be ever seeing the picture of the Lord. You will actually feel that Sattva or purity, light, bliss, knowledge and Prema are ever flowing from the Lord to you and filling up your heart.

You will have no body-consciousness. Even if there be body-consciousness, it will be in the form of a Samskara or a mental retention. A drunkard may not have full consciousness that he has a cloth round his body. He may feel that something is loosely hanging from his body. Even so, you will have a feeling of the body. You will feel that something is sticking to you like a loose cloth or loose shoes.

You will have no attraction for the sex. You will have no sex-idea. Women will appear to you as manifestations of the

Lord. Money and gold will appear to you as pieces of stone. You will have immense love for all creatures. You will be absolutely free from lust, greed, anger, jealousy, pride, delusion, etc. You will have peace of mind even when people insult you, beat you and persecute you. The reason why you are not perturbed is that you get immense spiritual strength from the Indweller or the Lord. Pain or pleasure, success or failure, honour or dishonour, respect or disrespect, gain or loss, are alike for you.

Even in dreams, you are in communion with the Lord. You will not behold any worldly pictures.

You will converse with the Lord in the beginning. You will see Him in physical form. When your consciousness becomes cosmic, conversation will stop. You will enjoy the language of the silence i.e. the language of the heart. From Vaikhari (vocal speech) you will pass on to Madhyama, Pasyanti and Para (subtle forms of sounds) and eventually you will rest in soundless Omkara or soundless Brahman.

Dispassion, discrimination, serenity, self-restraint, one-pointedness of mind, Ahimsa, Satyam, purity, forbearance, fortitude, patience, forgiveness, absence of anger, spirit of service, sacrifice, love for all, will be your habitual qualities. You will be a cosmic friend and benefactor.

During meditation you will have no idea of time. You will not hear any sounds. You will have no idea of the environments. You will forget your name and all sorts of relationship with others. You will enjoy perfect peace and bliss. Gradually you will rest in Samadhi.

Samadhi is an indescribable state. It is beyond the reach of mind and speech. In Samadhi or the superconscious state, the meditator loses his individuality and becomes identical with the Supreme Self. He becomes an embodiment of bliss, peace and knowledge. So much only can be said. You have to experience this yourself through constant meditation.

Contentment, unruffled state of mind, cheerfulness, patience, decrease in the excretions, sweet voice, eagerness and steadiness in the practice of meditation, disgust for worldly prosperity or success and company, desire to remain alone in a quiet room or in seclusion, desire for association with Sadhus and Sannyasins, Ekagrata or one-pointedness of mind are some of the signs which indicate that you are growing in purity, that you are progressing in the spiritual path.

You will hear various kinds of Anahata sounds of a bell, a kettle-drum, thunder, conch, Veena or flute, the humming of a bee, etc., during meditation. The mind can be fixed in any of these sounds. This also will lead to Samadhi. You will behold various kinds of colours and lights during meditation. This is not the goal. You will have to merge the mind in that which is the source for these lights and colours.

A student in the path of Vedanta ignores these sounds and lights. He meditates on the significance of the Mantra of the Upanishad by negating all forms. "The sun does not shine there, nor do the moon and the stars, nor does this lightning shine and much less this fire. When He shines everything shines after Him; by His light all these shine." He meditates also like this: "The air does not blow there. The fire does not burn there. There is neither sound nor touch, neither smell nor colour, neither mind nor Prana in that homogeneous essence," "Asabda, Asparsa, Arupa, Agandha, Aprana, Amana, Atindriya, Adrishya—Chidanandarupah Sivoham, Sivoham. I am blissful Siva. I am blissful Siva."

An Anecdote on Spiritual Experience

Sri Thakur Singhji, I.C.S., Commissioner of the Kumaon Division, accompanied by the District Magistrates of six Districts of the U.P., including Tehri-Garhwal, Dehra Dun, Lansdowne and Nainital, had come on a brief visit. On arrival all the officers and their families were entertained to tea. Some

of them expressed their desire to visit the Gita Bhavan and Paramartha Niketan; but the Commissioner alone preferred to enjoy Sri Swamiji's company.

"I came here specially to meet you and talk to you, Swamiji, on the various spiritual problems I have," said Sri Thakur Singhji, "and that is why I have declined to go with them." Then he had a long conversation with Swamiji on various spiritual matters like spiritual experiences, man's foremost duty, etc., the gist of which is given below:

"In all matters with which it is connected, Swamiji, science gives us a precise account of how a particular thing is constructed and how it grows: we are also given the successive signs that mark the growth. Are there in the practice of Yoga, Swamiji, any definite indications to measure the aspirant's progress—some experiences, for instance, he would have after, say, three months of practice, others which he would experience after a year, and so on?" asked Sri Thakur Singhji.

"Various Yogas give various experiences," replied Swamiji. "The practice of Pranayama and Hatha Yogic Kriyas, for instance, would give a graded series of psychic experiences. Seeing all kinds of ethereal lights and hearing certain Anahata sounds belong to this category. Here the sages who have propounded these Yogas have given very definite stages of spiritual experience. As the Kundalini passes from Chakra to Chakra, the Yogi has certain definite, verifiable, experiences. That is because each Chakra governs some particular Tattva and its mastery, therefore, gives specific experiences.

"Similarly in Tantrik Sadhana also, they have been able to give a definite chart of spiritual experiences. Each Sadhana has its own particular Siddhi and, therefore, the experiences of all Sadhakas following that particular Sadhana are invariably the same.

"But these are all lower experiences of an inferior type. They are psychic experiences which need not necessarily de-

note the aspirant's spiritual progress. Even the Bhakta's experiences of horripilation, shedding of tears, etc., though they are not so perfectly graded as those of the Hatha Yogic experiences, do not necessarily indicate spiritual progress.

When you enter the domain of the Spirit, you come into the sphere of the Infinite. Infinite are the Yogas and infinite are the experiences, too. Each man's Yoga is his own. For he has brought his own Samskaras and Vasanas and he strives in his own way to reach the Goal. These two interacting on each other, give him various experiences. For instance, as he approaches the transcendental, infinite, immortal Self, the aspirant would enjoy great inner peace and indescribable happiness. He is not easily affected by what goes on around him. Not only this, he is able to radiate peace and happiness to all those who come into contact with him. He becomes GOOD and radiates goodness. This is the most important sign of spiritual progress. God is Perfect Goodness. The aspirant who progresses towards the realisation of God, therefore, grows in goodness. His evil qualities slowly vanish and are replaced by sublime virtues. If this most essential element is not there, then all other visions and sounds are practically useless. By his mere presence the advanced Yogi is able to inspire people to lead a good life, free from hatred and malice. His heart is filled with cosmic love and, therefore, he serves all spontaneously and selflessly. These are all real signs of spiritual progress.

"But, beyond all these is the ultimate experience. That is indescribable. Peace and happiness, undisturbed tranquillity of mind—these are all great signs of progress, but they do not constitute the Goal. The Goal is to become God. You must become one with God. This is achieved through ceaseless practice of meditation, after establishing oneself in Virtue and Goodness. That supreme experience when the Yogi feels he is one with God, no words can describe."

Sri Thakur Singhji described some instances which proved that he had a natural power of intuition. Swamiji said, "That is good. It shows you had practised Yoga in your previous birth and achieved very good progress."

Chapter Nine

EXPERIENCES OF THE JNANA YOGI

Phases of Experience in Jnana Yoga

The student of Jnana Yoga destroys all thoughts of objects. He annihilates darkness through his discrimination. Then a radiant light appears before him.

He experiences dizziness.

Then he comes across void—Akasa.

Then Moha (delusion) manifests. The Jnana Yogi dispels this Moha through enquiry or Vichara.

Passing thus through the stages of darkness, light, sleep and Moha, the sage at last reaches the stage of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. He now enjoys Absolute Quiescence. He attains real Jnana. He becomes the ocean of eternal Jnana and the all-pervading Absolute Consciousness.

He is drowned in an ocean of nectar. He enjoys the eternal bliss, where the seer alone exists without the visible objects.

His mind becomes of the nature of Jnana. It becomes Chit—Consciousness itself. Being divested of all visions of objects, it contains Consciousness proper, like an ocean in an ordinary equilibrated stage without the disturbance of waves.

The sage freed from all attraction towards objects, becomes of the nature of wisdom pervading everywhere. He reaches that Jnana state which is above all and in which nothing but Truth exists and becomes the ocean of eternal Jnana and the all-pervading Absolute Consciousness.

The Hamsa sports itself in the permanent pool of spiritual bliss. The sage enjoys himself in his own Atman or Self.

Four Types of Jnanins

There are four types of Jnanins, viz., Brahma Vid, Vara, Variyan and Varishtha, according to the degree of Sattvic ego present in the Jivanmukta.

Brahmavid, Brahmavid-Vara, Brahmavid-Variyan and Brahmavid-Varishtha are the four types of Jnanins. Brahmavid is one who is in the fourth Bhumika (Sattvapatti) Brahmavid-Vara is in the fifth Bhumika (Asamsakti), Brahmavid-Variyan is in the sixth Bhumika (Padartha Bhavana), Brahmavid-Varishtha is in the seventh Bhumika (Turiya). Brahmavid-Varishtha is always absorbed in Samadhi. He has to be fed forcibly. He is a Videhamukta. He will not be able to do any activity for Loka Sangraha (well-being of the world). Jada Bharata, late Mouni Swami of Kumbakonam, late Akalkot Swami (Maharashtra) were all Brahmavid-Varishthas. They had no body-consciousness. A Vid or a Vara has very slight consciousness of the body in the form of a mental retentum or Samskara. A Vid and a Vara can work in the world. Some people imitate the state of an Avadhuta and throw away the clothes. A real Avadhuta is absolutely nude. As he is always established in Brahman, he forgets the body and surroundings and the cloth drops by itself just as the cloth drops in the case of a drunkard. One must be careful in judging.

Seven Stages of Jnana

The seven stages of Jnana are Subhechcha, Vicharana, Tanumanasi, Sattvapatti, Asamsakti, Padartha-Bhavana Turiya.

(1) *Subhechcha*: When one feels that he is in ignorance and sincerely wishes to acquire spiritual knowledge he is in Subhechcha.

(2) *Vichara*: When one is convinced of the worthlessness of the world and deeply ponders over the method of destroying

ignorance and attaining spiritual knowledge, he is said to be in Vicharana.

(3) *Tanumanasi*: When the mind becomes thin like a thread due to distaste for objects of the world and is intensely engrossed in the contemplation of the Soul, he is in Tanumanasi.

(4) *Sattvapatti*: When the mind becomes pure (Sattvic) and is established in the Self due to prolonged contemplation, he is said to be in Sattvapatti.

(5) *Asamsakti*: When one becomes completely detached from the objective world due to the knowledge of the Self, he is in Asamsakti.

(6) *Padartha Bhavana*: When one realises that things of the world are not really material things but only the One Brahman, he is said to be in Padartha-Bhavana.

(7) *Turiya*: When one completely negates the manifold distinctions of the world and realises the Undivided (Akhanda), One Essence (Ekarasa), Satchidananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss) he is said to be in Turiya. This state of Turiya is called the state of Jivanmukti or liberation, while-in-life.

The keen desire which rises in one to get Moksha or enjoy the Bliss of the Self through Vairagya or indifference to sensual enjoyments, study of Atma-Jnana Sastras and associations with the knowers of Brahman is Subhechcha or the first state. The aspirant who is endowed with the four means of salvation, hears the Srutis and the significance of “Tat Tvam Asi” Mahavakya at the feet of a Guru, and then reflects deeply on what he has heard. This is Vicharana or the second state. By practice of the two stages, the mind is concentrated on Brahman at his will. The mind is rendered then like a thread. Brahmakara Vritti is generated. This is the third stage called Tanumanasi. All desires are eradicated now by the practice of the above three processes. Tattva Jnana is developed. The mind is filled with purity or Sattva. This is the fourth Bhumika called Sattvapatti. The mind

melts in Brahman gradually. In the fifth stage or Asamsakti he has no connection with the objects and their Samskaras and Sankalpas. Then comes the sixth stage, Padartha-Bhavana. All perceptions of objects external and internal are lost (Abhava Pratiti). The Jnani, if at all he has any perception of objects, has it only through sheer compulsion of others. The seventh stage is Turiya. The Jnani is drowned in the Atmic Bliss. He has completely got rid of all conceptions of heterogeneity. There is no Triputi now either external or internal.

One who functions in the first three Bhumikas is called a Mumukshu. One who functions in the fourth Bhumika is called a Brahmavid. One who functions in the fifth Bhumika is called a Brahmavidvara. One who functions in the sixth Bhumika is called a Brahmavidvariyan. One who functions in the seventh Bhumika is called a Brahmavidvarishtha.

Vama Deva, Jada Bharata, Akalkot Swami (Maharashtra), late Kumbakonam Mauni Swami are all Brahmavidvariyan and Brahmavidvarishthas. They were perfect Avadhutas. Food had to be thrust inside by force. They were absolutely unconscious of the body and the surroundings. They could not work for the Lokasangraha (for the well-being of the world) as Sri Sankara did. A Jnani of the fourth and fifth Bhumikas only can work in the world. Sri Sankara, Raja Janaka come under this class. A Jnani from the sixth and seventh Bhumikas will have to come down to fourth and fifth Bhumikas if he desires to uplift the world.

A Jnani of absolute seventh Bhumika who has not even a bit of body-consciousness cannot live for more than 14 days (from 2 or 3 to 14 days). The body will drop down within these 14 days. Western psychologists put it down as seven days.

One School of thought says that knowledge of Brahman dawns in the fourth Bhumika. Another school of thought says that the real highest knowledge of Brahman can be had only in the seventh Bhumika and the fourth, fifth and sixth are stages

only. According to the degree of annihilation of Vasanas these different stages are termed different names.

In Turiya there is double consciousness. The Jnani identifies himself with the Brahman but he is conscious of his Sakshi state also for Jagrat, Svapna and Sushupti Avasthas. In Turiyatita, the Sakshi Bhava vanishes. The Jnani is enthroned in pure Nirvikalpa. There is Absolute Abhava of the world, external and internal and everything.

Some term Turiyatita people as Videhamuktas. Some say that Videhamukti can be had only when the Jnani throws off his physical body. It is not correct. Videhamukti can be had while one is alive. Janaka was called a Videha (one without a body). Vama Deva, Jada Bharata and Dattatreya were all Videhamuktas, while they were living. In Videhamukti the Jnani is unconscious of his body. Hence it is termed Videhamukti.

Isvara also has double consciousness. Only during Cosmic Pralaya, He has pure Nirvikalpa consciousness. To pass on into the seventh Bhumika, the Jnani has to give up his Lokasangraha activities of all sorts.

People who do a little of Tapas, and have Vairagya, Titiksha and control of the physical body and its movements (Kashtha Mauna) are mistaken for Sapta-Bhumika Jnani (a sage of the seventh stage). A Jnani of the seventh Bhumika is very, very rare. The above Tapasvin may show the external signs of a Jnani. It is simply an induced mechanical state through change of habits. He may have established new habits. He may sit in one place. He may not look at anybody. He may have a steady fixed gaze by the practice of Trataka. He may not show any preference for food. He may roll on hot sand. He may lie down on ice. These are all physical Titiksha practices only. They have nothing to do with Jnana. Jnana is pure internal, Anubhava state. The Tapasvin with Titiksha may not have an internal

Brahma-vichara state. You will have to be very, very careful in your judgment.

You must be a pure man. You must live with a Jnani for a long time. You must be in his company constantly. You must know his antecedence in detail, his previous life and conduct, his Sastric studies, his life of Tapas, his Guru, etc. Then only you can draw a safe and right conclusion. A Shakespeare can know a Shakespeare. A Jnani only can know a Jnani. This testing business of a Jnani is a very difficult one.

Double-consciousness of a Jivanmukta

The Jivanmukta is a liberated sage. He is freed from the trammels of birth and death. He is emancipated while living. He has cut off all bonds of egoism, lust, anger, greed, selfishness, pride, likes, dislikes, exhilaration and depression. He has supreme knowledge of Brahman. He is free from all doubts. He has nothing more to be known or attained.

The Jivanmukta has double consciousness. He may be absorbed in Samadhi or he may work like an ordinary man for the good of the world. Internally he has the Bhava or mental attitude, "I am a witness (Sakshi), I am non-doer (Akarta), I am non-enjoyer (Abhokta)," and thus he may be engaged for Lokasangraha or for implementing the cosmic will, as a detached agent. The world appears to him, like a mirage. He enjoys the sense-objects offered by others like a child. They do not taint him for his consciousness is rooted in Brahman. He beholds this world like one seen in a dream.

The Jivanmukta is like the man who is sitting on the wall. On one side is the conditioned existence in the awareness of the world. On the other side is the unconditioned awareness-whole which is found only in the state of Self-realisation. A man sitting on one side of the world cannot see what is there on the other side. A worldly man cannot have the knowledge of Brahman. Likewise, a Videhamukta, whose individuality is abso-

lutely merged in Brahman, cannot have the awareness of the world, which is non-existent to him. If his body is to be maintained, it has to be fed and cared for by others. The Videhamukta is thus not in a position to engage himself for the good of the world.

The double-consciousness of the Jivanmukta places him in a unique position, like the man on the wall, to be aware of both the spheres of consciousness. His realisation of Brahman is irrevocable. He cannot be shaken from his supreme consciousness. Yet, for the good of humanity, he engages a part of his consciousness to function in the worldly sphere. Lord Krishna is an ideal example who possessed double consciousness.

Samadhi Jnani and Vyavahara Jnani

A Jnani is one who has knowledge of the unity of Self. He who has Vyavahara-apeksha (desire for Vyavahara, worldly activities) and works in the world is a Vyavahara-Jnani. This desire for works is due to his Prarabdha. He uses his body and mind as his instruments just as a carpenter uses his tools. He has also Triputi but sees the whole world within himself. He sees nothing outside, just as you do. He sees through His Divya Drishti or Jnana Chakshus, and not through the physical eyes. It is very difficult for a worldly man with practical Buddhi to mentally visualise how a Jnani sees the physical universe while he is working. The impression produced in the water with a stick is not so deep and lasting as an impression made with the same stick in loose earth. Similar is the case with these two types of Jnanins. In Vyavahara Jnani, the impression of Nirvikalpa Samadhi or Brahmakara Vritti Sthiti is not so lasting, deep and continuous as that of a Samadhi Jnani. In the former it is like that of an impression in water. In the latter it is like that of an impression in the earth. It is deep and continuous like Tailadhara (steady flow of oil).

A Vyavahara Jnani knows that this is Vishtha (faecal matter) this a Chandana (sandal paste); this is a fool, this is an intelligent man; this is an Adhikari, this is an Anadhikari; this is success, this is failure; this is a rogue, this is an honest man. But he is not affected in his feelings. He is neither exalted when he gets success nor depressed when he fails. He neither loves an honest man nor hates the rogue. In this sense, he has Sama Drishti (equal vision).

A Vyavahara Jnani will experience pain when his finger is cut, but a Samadhi Jnani will not experience pain even a bit even when his leg is amputated. The case of Shams Tabriez of Mooltan of late would serve as an example to justify the truth of the above statement. When he was skinned out, he laughed and uttered "Analhaq, Analhaq" (Analhaq means 'I am He' and corresponds to Hindu 'Soham').

A Vyavahara Jnani sees names and forms but a Samadhi Jnani withdraws himself from the universe and does not see names and forms at all.

Knowledge is the same in these two types of Jnanins. But the Samadhi Jnani enjoys more Ananda than the Vyavahara Jnani.

Samadhi Jnani is one who is ever absorbed in Brahman. He does not see names and forms. The world has entirely vanished for him. He is quite unable to work. He is a Muzub. He is a Paramahamsa. Late Akalkot Swami of Maharashtra, late Kumbakonam Mouni Swami (who remained for 25 years in an Advaita Samadhi state), Jada Bharata, Sri Dattatreya were all Samadhi Jnanins. They all belonged to sixth (Padartha-bhavana) and seventh (Turiya) Jnana Bhumikas. Late Akalkot Swami and Mauni Swami of Kumbakonam were unconscious of the movement of the bowels and the Sevakas (attendants) had to wash their bottoms. Janaka and Sri Sankara were Vyavahara Jnanins. Those who are in the fourth

(Sattvapatti) and the fifth (Asamsakti) Jnana Bhumikas (stages of Jnana) only can work.

The description given of a Jnani in Bhagavad Gita and various other books is quite inadequate, incomplete and imperfect. His state can never be described by the finite speech. His state can never be imagined by the limited mind. He shines in his own pristine glory.

When you put a drop of blood under the microscope and examine it carefully, you are struck with wonder. You see millions of red blood corpuscles, white cells, leucocytes, lymphocytes, nuclei, pigments, etc.

Similarly, a Jnani with the help of the powerful lens, eye of Atman (Divya Chakshus) sees the whole world with all details of creations. He sees the astral body, causal body with its Samskaras, the Pranic aura, psychic aura, magnetic aura, etc., of a man. Food has to be thrust forcibly in the case of Samadhi Jnani. Samadhi Jnani is either a Brahmavid-Variyan or a Brahmavid-Varishtha. A Vyavahara Jnani is a Brahmavid and Brahmavid-Vara.

When you are in a closed room and when you look outside through a small hole in the door, your vision is very, very limited. You can see a few trees, one or two men, a portion of sky, etc. But when you come out you can have a wide range of vision. Similarly, when you see with the physical eyes, the vision is very limited. A Jnani sees the whole world within himself (as part and parcel of his own Self) through the cosmic eye, through the eye of Atman.

The Sage's Experience

I am ever free. I alone am. I am taintless, spaceless, timeless. The world appears like a mirage within me.

I am infinite, imperishable, self-luminous, self-existent, self-contained. I know neither pleasure, nor pain, neither joy nor sorrow, neither happiness nor misery.

I am beginningless. I am endless. I am decayless. I am birthless. I am deathless.

Never was I born. I am ever free. I am perfect. I am pure. I am independent.

I am tranquil. I am Pure Knowledge, transcendent. I am above good and evil, virtue and vice.

I am one. I go nowhere. I come from nowhere. I abide in myself. I pervade the entire universe. I am all-permeating and interpenetrating.

I am Absolute. I am non-dual. I am pure Wisdom. I am pure Consciousness.

I am the limitless, infinite ocean of consciousness. The wind of mind produces the waves of worlds.

I am Atman, impersonal and all-pervading. I am Atman, the Self of all beings. I am the Substratum, support, source for everything.

I am the nectar which is Knowledge Absolute. I am beyond the reach of the mind, the intellect and the senses.

I am unattached (Asanga). I am not the doer (Akarta). I am not the agent. I am not the enjoyer (Abhokta). I am the silent Witness (Sakshi).

Free from subject and object am I, Satchidananda Brahman am I.

The one, the taintless, transcendental Truth am I. Ever stable, peaceful, immovable, immutable, invulnerable, unperturbable Truth am I.

The nectar of Immortality am I. The immortality-giving knowledge am I. Ever-blissful Siva am I.

I am the taintless Nirvana. I am Turiya, the fourth stage of consciousness. I am Be-ness.

I am Freedom Absolute. I am Supreme Peace Transcendental. I am Supreme Silence Stupendous.

. There is neither space nor time in me. I am Infinity. I am Eternity.

First I abandoned desires, then attachment. Now I abide in Supreme Peace.

I do not mix much. I do not move. I meditate. Now I abide in eternal peace.

I controlled the senses and the mind. I cultivated dispassion. Now I abide in everlasting peace.

The world is an illusion. Brahma is the only Reality. Knowing this, now I abide in peace that passeth all understanding.

“I am all-pervading, immortal Atman.” Knowing this, now I abide in peace immortal.

I have renounced both action and inaction. I live happily in any state now. So I abide in perennial peace.

The sense-objects are the robbers. I have annihilated these robbers. I am quite safe and happy. Now I abide in unalloyed peace.

The World Is a Dream

How the Jnani Deduces the Unreality of the Universe

Both in waking and in dream, objects are “perceived” or “seen” as different from the subject. The character of “being seen” is common to both kinds of experience. There is subject-object relationship in waking as well as in dream. This is the similarity between the two. “Something is seen as an object” means “something is other than the Self.” The experience of the not-self is illusory, for, if the not-self were real, the Self would be limited and unreal. The illusory experience of the not-self is common to both waking and dream. In waking, the mind experiences through the senses; in dream the mind alone experiences. In both the states, the mind alone experiences, whether externally or internally.

Dream is transcended by waking, waking by Turiya. Hence both dream and waking are contradicted. Waking contradicts dream, and dream contradicts waking. When the one is, the other is not. Neither of the two is continuously existent. This proves the unreality of both.

Duality is not real, because duality is the opposite of eternity. Without duality there is no perception. Hence, anything that is perceived is unreal whether in dream or in waking. Dream is real when there is no waking. Waking is real when there is no dream. Hence, both are unreal experiences. They depend on one another for their existence. One cannot say whether he is dreaming or waking without referring one state to another. Desires are the rulers of all experiences in waking and also in dream. Waking is physical functioning of desires; dream is mental functioning of desires. The senses are moved by desires in waking; the mind is moved by desires in dreaming. Both these states are like flowing streams. They do not persist for ever in one state. That which persists for ever is real. Dream and waking have a beginning and an end. Change is the characteristic of all perceived objects. Change implies non-existence at the beginning and also at the end. That which does not exist at the beginning and does not exist at the end does not exist in the middle also. Therefore, waking is unreal like dream.

Reason for Unreality

It may be contended that waking is real, because it is the cause of dream, and dream is not the cause of waking. But that contention is without support. If waking is a cause, it must be real. If it is real, it must exist for ever. Waking itself is without reality, for it does not exist always. If the cause itself is unreal, how can it produce a real effect? Both these are unreal states. One who eats stomachful in waking state may feel hungry in the dream state and vice versa. Things appear to be real only in a particular condition. They are not real always. That which is not always real is an appearance and so unreal.

The object is called an object just because there is a perceiving subject. Similarly, a subject is called a subject just because there is a perceived object. Neither of the two is self-existent. And, therefore, both prove themselves to be unreal. Subject and object appear in the form of cause and effect. Without an effect nothing can be a cause. The mind perceives and recognises objects only by relating one thing to another. There cannot be a lapse of time in which the cause remains unchanged. If the cause can exist unchanged for sometime, there is no reason why it should change at any time at all. Either there is continuous causation, or no causation at all. If causation is continuous, cause and effect become identical, being inseparable from one another. But the Jnani transcends the scheme of causation. Self-realisation breaks the chain of causation, and consequently the world of experience appears false.

Marks of a Realised Sage—An Anecdote

A learned visitor had Darshan of Swamiji today in the office, when he expressed to Swamiji certain doubts which Swamiji readily cleared. He first said, "Swamiji, I want to know something about Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The scriptures say that a person who has attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi would not publicly say that he has attained it. Then, how are we to know that such and such a man has attained the highest wisdom or not?" Swamiji replied, "We can know it by observing his actions, behaviour, talk, equal vision, peace, bliss, perfect serenity, balanced mind under all conditions, cosmic love, and steady wisdom (Sthitha-prajna)." "How can he himself know that he has attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi?" was the visitor's next question. Swamiji answered. "If his experience tallies with the experience of the Seers of the Upanishads, if he enjoys absolute bliss and peace, if he maintains unperturbed serenity of mind under the worst situations, if his doubts have been rent asunder, if he beholds unity in diversity, if he feels that he is the Self in all beings and the whole world is his body, if he is perfectly free from

desires for sensual objects, Raga, Dvesha, egoism, anger, lust, mineness, pride and attachment, he can be sure that he has attained Realisation."

A Videhamukta is a Turiyatita, one who has transcended Turiya, the seventh Bhumika. He is ever absorbed in Samadhi. He has to be fed by others. He cannot take food himself. Jada Bharata, late Mauni Swami of Kumbakonam, late Akalkot Swami (Maharashtra) were Videhamuktas. A Jivanmukta is in the state of Sattvapatti (fourth Bhumika), Asamsakti (fifth Bhumika) or Padartha-Bhavana (sixth Bhumika). He has a slight consciousness of the body in the form of a mental-retentum or Samskara. He can take food himself. He need not be fed. His consciousness of the body may be compared to the consciousness of body of a sleeping person. When some flies sit on his body, although he is sleeping, he will immediately drive them off, though he may not be conscious of them. Such is the Jivanmukta's consciousness of the body. He attends to his bodily wants mechanically due to force of Prarabdha and previous Samskaras. A Videhamukta will cast away his body in seven to twenty-one days after attaining that state.

Chapter Ten

STATE OF LIBERATION

A Detailed Analysis of the state of Moksha

Sadyo Mukti

All endeavours aim at the common Ideal of the perpetual abolition of sorrow and the experience of unending bliss. Bliss is only in the Infinite and sorrow is only in the finite. There is no bliss in the finite and there is no sorrow in the Infinite. Therefore, the attainment of the Infinite Life is the supreme purpose of finite life. Knowledge and meditation have both their dear aim in the realisation of the Absolute. Moksha is the highest exaltation of the self in its pristine nature of supreme perfection. Emancipation is the Consciousness of the Reality; not becoming something which previously did not exist, not travelling to another world of greater joy. It is the knowledge of eternal existence, the awareness of the essential nature of Pure Being. It is the freedom attained by knowing that we are always free. Knowledge is not merely the cause for freedom, but is itself freedom. Moksha consists in Jnana (knowledge) and is not the effect or product of Jnana. Jnana is Existence itself, and hence, it cannot be a means to attain Jnana of Existence, which is Moksha, as a thing does not attain itself. Chit is the same as Sat. To be That is what is Moksha. It is to realise one's Self, to be Oneself, to be the All.

“There is no consciousness after the death (of individuality)” said Yajnavalkya. Since Consciousness alone is the entirety of being, there is no consciousness of anything objective in the highest state. It is the Fullness of Perfect Existence. It is, but is not anything; it sees, but sees not anything; it hears, but hears not anything; it knows, but knows not anything. It does

not go to where it was not; it does not get what it did not have. Even the expression “It knew only Itself” (Brih. Up. I.iv.10) is an understatement of the Truth, for it implies self-consciousness which is the characteristic of Isvara and not Brahman. Brahman does not know, for It is knowledge; It does not enjoy, for It is enjoyment; It is not “existent” but “existence.” It is non-material, and has no contact with any objective being. “It eats nothing, no one eats It.” It is the supreme “incorporeal which pain and pleasure do not touch.” The realisation of the Self is in a way like the shining of the sun when the clouds no more cover him. It is the regaining of originality in the absolute sense. It is “quenching the fire of death with the water of knowledge” (Brih. Up. III.ii.10). It is deathless impersonality of conscious nature, not merely living as an eternal person. A person, even the absolute person (Isvara), is non-eternal. No actual change takes place in the realisation of the Truth, but it appears to be all change! “Though the Full may be taken out from the Full, the Full alone remains without change.” Even the utter extinction of personality does not involve that least transformation in true existence. It is the simple knowing, the great knowing, so mysterious and complicated, the ever-unsolved problem, the only problem of the whole universe. And, yet, it is the only Truth to the Knower. The curious riddle, somehow, makes one feel that, truly, nothing happens in Infinity, though worlds may seem to roll in It.

That which is so simply said as “Existence-Consciousness” and which is so easy to understand, is, after all, the hardest nut to crack, never understood, never known, never realised by any individual, the supreme identity of the greatest positive Truth and the greatest negation in one. The Absolute is really supra-relative, supra-mental, supra-rational. Whatever is spoken or thought is not the Truth as It is. Truth is the union of the cosmic thinker and the cosmic thinking. There is no separate object of this thinking, nothing that is thought of here, for thinking itself is the object of thinking though thinks itself, all objects

are mere processes of cosmic thinking, nothing real in themselves. Thought and its object, knowledge and the known, seeing and the seen, relation and the object related to, mind and the universe, are identical with the Universal Essence. The conscious transcending of the successive double relation in the cosmos of the thinker who is identical with the thinking, and of the thinking which is identical with that which is thought of is Liberation. The universe has no reality independent of its Universal Knower. The original delusion of the difference between the thinker and the thinking is greater than and is the cause of the secondary delusion of the difference between the thinking and the thought-of. There is the thinking because there is the thinker; there is the thought-of because there is the thinking. The thinking is the object of the thinker; the thought-of is the object of the thinking. Egoism or duality-consciousness and the world or multiplicity consciousness are the respective effects of the mistake that the object is independent of and different from the subject in both these cases.

Samsara is the knower-knowledge-known relationship. But it must however be remembered here that the distinction between the thinker and the thinking and that between the thinking and the thought-of is not made in and is not valid to the Cosmic Consciousness of Isvara. But this distinction is superimposed by the individual on Isvara when it perceives as an individual knower, its own distinctness and the variety of world-manifestation. Relations are meaningful to the individual alone and not to the Universal Being. These distinctions are present even in the superhuman individuals, even in those who have reached Brahmaloka or the subtlest possible state which is within the jurisdiction of individualistic consciousness. That which is above all distinctions and relations is Brahman, the knowledge of which is neither thinking nor sleeping. This is that which is asserted through endless, denials, impossible to describe, impossible to imagine, nothing, everything! The only definition of the nature of the Reality is perhaps "That which is not anything, but

not nothing, that which is everything, and knows nothing but It-self." That is Brahman! Therefore, bondage and liberation are only a matter of forgetfulness and awareness of fact respectively, and not a change in being. The complete transcendence of one's individuality is at once the realisation of the Absolute. The moment the Jiva is negated the cosmic play is explained and the cosmos and Isvara sink into Brahman.

Moksha is neither a mass of consciousness nor self-consciousness. It is the very life and order of the universe, ever-present, unchanging. It transcends even the sense of immortality which also is conceptual. The Light of the Absolute puts a sudden end to all relative existence and the world does not exist even as a remembrance. There is no such thing as inert, inanimate, dead matter or blind force. It is all supreme Force, Knowledge and Bliss without motion or mind. There are no planes of existence, no states of consciousness, no degrees of reality. This is the most blessed and supreme state of absolute freedom and conscious eternal life, not a conviction but actual being. It is the awful grandeur of utter negation of limitation and experience of Infinitude, not mere continued personal life. It is the complete dissolution of thought in simple existence which is the mightiest nothing! It is an immediate here and now of spacelessness and timelessness, the inexpressible, beyond joy and sorrow, beyond knowledge and ignorance, beyond life and death, beyond all that is beyond! It is the fullest Reality, the completest Consciousness, the immensest Power, the intensest Bliss. Truth, knowledge, power, happiness and immortality are Its shadows. Unseen, transcendent, uninferable, unthinkable, ununderstandable, indescribable, imperishable, the loftiest, the deepest, the Truth, the Great—That is the Absolute. The light of limitless number of suns is darkness in Its presence. It oversteps the boundaries of being and nullifies all ideas of existence. It is the Giant-Spirit which swallows up the mind and the ego and wipes off the individual-consciousness to the very extreme. It is the Thunder that breaks the heart of the universe, the Lightning

that fuses all sense of empirical reality. The bubble bursts into the ocean and the river enters the sea! The soul merges into the extremely Real.

The Grandeur of the Absolute is grander than all other grandeur. It is the crowning edifice of truth and glory.

Nothing is beyond That. It is neither form, nor content nor existent. The soul sinks into It by an experience of all-fullness, neither essence, nor kingdom, nor wisdom, neither equal, nor unequal, neither static nor moving, neither sitting nor resting, neither one nor two, neither true nor false, neither this-ness nor that-ness, nothing known to us, nothing known to any existent being. It has no name, there is no definition of It! It is That which is. It is not love nor grace, nor world, nor soul, nor God, nor freedom, nor light, for all these are relative conceptions. It is not Satchidananda which is only an ideal ‘other’ of what we have experience. Satchidananda is only the logical highest, a mere intellectual prop. Reality is beyond Satchidananda also. It is itself, the eternal sun that shines in the infinite sky of the absolute world! It transcends cosmic consciousness. It is the supra-essential essence. Eternity and Infinity embrace one another to form Its Centre of Experience. It is an Ocean that sweeps away the earth and the heaven and the netherland. Sun, moon and stars are dissolved in It. Brahma, Vishnu and Siva vanish into It. It is the Life of life, Wisdom of wisdom, Joy of joy, Power of power, Real of real, Essence of essence. Birthlessness and deathlessness float in It like ripples. It is the supreme Death of all, and yet, It is the highest peak of real life. The totality of all the joys of the whole universe is merely a distorted fragment of That Supreme. It puts an end to the vicious circle of transmigratory life.

The Upanishads have left no stone unturned and have spared no pain in attempting to give the best expression to the majestic Absolute-Experience:

“The knower of the Self crosses beyond sorrow.”

"He who knows that Supreme Brahman becomes Brahman Itself."

"The knower of Brahman attains the Highest."

"One who is established in Brahman reaches Immortality."

"He returns not again, he returns not again."

By knowing Him alone one goes to That which is beyond death. By knowing the Supreme Being, the wise one casts off both joy and sorrow. They who see Him, the Self-Existent,—they, and no others, have eternal peace. Of him, whose desires are completely satisfied, who is totally perfected, all desires dissolve themselves here itself. The liberated one becomes onefold, threefold, fivefold, sevenfold, ninefold, elevenfold, hundred-and-elevenfold, twenty-thousandfold! He goes to the other shore of darkness. That state is ever illumined, it is always day there. Time, age and death, sorrow, merit and demerit do not go there. Fearless is the state of the Bliss of Brahman. Even the gods fear him, even Indra and Prajapati cannot obstruct him. He becomes the Self-Emperor. The knot of the heart is broken, all doubts are rent asunder, and all actions perish, when That is seen, which is the Highest and the Deepest. His vital-spirits do not depart, they are gathered up here itself. Being Brahman already, he becomes Brahman Itself. He is the maker of everything, he is the creator of all, the universe is his, he himself is the universe. This is the supreme treasure. The freed souls enter into the All, they enter into Brahman, they are liberated beyond mortal nature. The whole constitution of individuality becomes unified in the Supreme Imperishable. As rivers enter the ocean, leaving name and form, so the wise one, liberated from name and form, reaches the Transcendental Divine Being. This is Immortality.

This is Immediate Liberation (Sadyomukti), the instantaneous experience of the Absolute through the sudden destruction of the fabric of personality built by Avidya, Kama and

Karma. Karma is the child of Kama which is never fulfilled until its source, Avidya, is transcended through the realisation of Brahman which is unsurpassed perfection. How can, by knowing one thing, another thing be attained? The attainment and the knowledge here are the same, self-identical. The supreme Brahman is the All.

Sadyomukti is the processless immediate experience of Brahman, spaceless and timeless, on account of one's habituation to the Non-dual knowledge of the Self. It is given to a very few to realise Brahman in this way, for most of the aspirants cannot proceed with their meditations without some kind of objective content in their consciousness. The quick and sudden illumination, which Sadyomukti is, is a very unique experience, and it puts an end to the relative notions of Isvara, Jiva and Jagat. In this, there is neither the experience of the degrees of phenomenon nor resting in the region of Isvara or Brahmaloka after being freed. It is at once being Brahman.

Krama Mukti

There are in the Upanishads intimations of Kramamukti or the progressive process of liberation of the soul. The soul reaches the Saguna Brahman or Parameshvara who transcends even the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. This great Lord of the universe is also called "Uttama Purusha" or "Purushottama". He is the Absolute-Individual, the Supreme Brahman manifested as the Cause of the origin, the sustenance and the dissolution of the universe. The Upanishads are emphatic in their statements that one who reaches through knowledge this Supreme Cause does not return to the mortal coil, but proceeds further to the Absolute Reality. The Mundaka Upanishad says that the sages in the world of Brahma are liberated beyond death in the end of time. Those who attain the world of the Saguna Brahman remain there until the end of the universe, enjoying the effects of their 'Satyakarmas' and 'Satyasankalpas', the fruits of their desires and willings based

on Truth. Whatever they wish, it arises then and there instantaneously, for they are in harmony with the Universal Being. They enjoy the Highest approximation to the bliss of the Lord of the Universe. Their desires are not like those of the mortals in Samsara, for the latter's desires are flames of morbid passions based on untruth and arising out of intense selfishness and egoism set in opposition to the other individuals of the universe, whereas, the former's desires are absolute truth-willings which are attuned with the law of the God of the Universe, in spite of the individualities maintained by them there.

Practically the desire of the liberated soul is no desire at all in the general sense, for it is not the effect of Avidya (mixture of deluded passion and darkness) but of Maya (light of truth and knowledge). The desire of one liberated soul cannot be against that of another, for they all are co-existent with the One God; but the desires of one man are mostly against those of others, for they all are dissipated and cut off one from another by the separative egos and rooted in blind darkness. The liberated souls think and work through the higher thought of spiritual nature, not through the mind and sense-organs of the lower nature. They breathe the universal life and exist as partakers of the joy of the Master of the Universe. They have the unceasing immediacy of the consciousness of everything, an awareness of the inmost objective essences of the complete universe. Their experiences are, no doubt, objective, they being not identical with the Absolute, but they can have an entire knowledge of the universe through self-identification with anything in the universe, though this is different from the simultaneous Cosmic Consciousness of God or Isvara. But they are not opposed to the being of God; they work as God works, live as God lives, will as God wills, though all this happens spontaneously there. They are the sportive forms of the Absolute in Itself. They want nothing; they are satisfied with themselves. They do not crave for an entity second to themselves; they desire only themselves, and even when they enjoy the objects of the universe they do so with

an identity-consciousness of the two. They are like several circles with a common centre and radii of the same length, but comprehended within the Great Circle of the Infinite. The differences among these souls are not detrimental to the Infinite, since they are nearest to it. However, even truth-willings and enjoyments with consciousness of identity of things cannot be taken as the highest Liberation.

It is said that these souls enjoy all powers except those of universal creation, preservation and destruction which belong to God alone, and that conflict of actions may arise if all are endowed with the same power. This statement can be intelligible only when the relation between God and the liberated souls is not one of the identity but of difference. If Liberation means the highest knowledge of God, to live in the same world as God's, to live near to God, and to have a form similar to God's, and yet to be different from God, can only be lesser than liberation, because God is not one of many individuals, not a Samsari, but the only existing absolute individual, and to have any relation with Him is to know Him, and to know Him is to be one with Him, and to be one with Him is not to perceive duality.

The knowledge of God or Isvara, which these souls in Brahmaloka on the path of Krama Mukti have, is only an approximation to Isvara-consciousness, but is not the same as that. Hence these souls are neither omnipotent nor omniscient, though they have full freedom as far as their enjoyments within their circles are concerned. There does not arise the question of the conflict that may arise among the liberated souls endowed with the power of creation, preservation and destruction if all souls are one with Isvara. To be endowed with the same power and knowledge as God is to be non-different beings forming a One Whole which is God. And, since no two individuals can have identical knowledge without themselves destroying their different forms and becoming one being, we are led to suppose a difference in experience among these souls. Further when it is said that the liberated souls attain Absolute Experience only at

the end of the universe, it is implied that they cannot experience Absoluteness as long as Isvara exists as a Self-conscious being, which means that they are still having an objective experience and are not identical with Isvara. Otherwise there is no reason why they should retain their individualities until the end of the universe.

The correct view, however, seems to be that all those who meditate upon the Absolute Individual (God) through positive qualitative conceptions rest in the Absolute Individual who, in the end of time, ending the space-time-universe which is His own Body, dissolves Himself in the conscious power of the Absolute, which is non-different from the Absolute. These relatively liberated ones have their individualities not destroyed here but exist in the world of the Absolute Individual, i.e., the Absolute Individual is experienced by them not directly but as an objective conscious universe. This Self-Dissolution of God is, in some respects, similar to the deep sleep of the worldly individual who also, in the end of the day, ending his body-consciousness, dissolves himself in the unconscious power based on the Atman, which is superimposed on the Atman. But the difference between the two dissolutions, however, is in the fact that in the case of God, there is no further forced coming back to universe-consciousness, no subsequent dreaming and waking state, and there is Absolute Experience, whereas, in the case of the worldly individual, there is forced coming back to body-consciousness, there is subsequent dreaming and waking state, and there is no Self-experience. There is Kama and Karma in the individual because of Avidya, but in God there is Vidya, universal consciousness or absolute Self-Consciousness alone, and hence, there are no concomitant Kama and Karma which are the causes of objective multiplicity-consciousness and the activity therefor. Desire and action in the individual are the outcome of the darkness of ignorance, but they do not exist in Vidya which is the light of knowledge. The souls who are in the World of Isvara or the Absolute Individual experience it as an

Intelligence World of Suddha Sattva corresponding to their own personalities made of the same substance. The soul is said to reach God through the passage of the sun (Mund. Up. I.ii.11) and, thus, pass on to the Absolute. Anywise, the imaginary problem of the possibility of the multiple lordship of the liberated souls does not arise, any more than the possibility of the existence of many Absolutes and Eternities. When there is individuality there is no omniscience or omnipotence, and when there are these there is no individuality. If we are to be alive to the sentences which declare that the liberated soul "goes round laughing, sporting, enjoying with women and chariots and friends not remembering the appendage of the body" (Chh. Up. VIII.xii.3) we can be so only by convincing ourselves that this state cannot be that of the Consciousness of the Absolute, or that this may be the condition of the Jivamuktta who does mysterious and ununderstanding actions, and who, though he has no consciousness of his body, is yet made to animate his body through a slight trace of the existent pure egoism unconnected with consciousness. This is, in other words, the remainder of that part of his Prarabdha Karma which is unobstructive to Knowledge.

The state of Jivanmukti has no connection with the physical body; it is a state of consciousness; so it can be experienced even when the physical body is dropped, i.e., even in Brahmaloka. The Jivanmuktta of this physical world, with his physical body, too, is really in Brahmaloka in his consciousness, though the body is in this world. Those who have not attained Jivanmukti here and are not ready for Sadyo Mukti immediately after the Prana stops functioning in the present physical body, attain this through Krama Mukti after the death of the physical body. This shows that a Videhamuktta is not one who exists in Brahmaloka but who has merged in the Absolute. Or, we have to make a distinction between two kinds of Videhamuktas—those who have individualities either in a lower superhuman experience or in Brahmaloka and are on the

verge of Absolute Experience on the exhaustion of their Prarabdha which is the cause of their superhuman experience and their experience in Brahmaloka (the arising from which is called the waking up of Brahma or Hiranyagarbha) and those who have actually merged in Brahman. In Brahmaloka the soul is like a perfect Jivanmukta of this world and all its actions are spontaneous promptings of the pure Prarabdha and not conscious willings born of a deliberately egoistic personality. If we are to be consistent with the demands of Jivanmukti we have to hold that even the Satyakamas and Satya-sankalpas or desires and willings based on Truth in the liberated soul of the Brahmaloka are really not conscious actions but spontaneous outpourings of the remaining momentum of actions done previous to the rise of Self-knowledge, which was non-obstructive to the rise of knowledge. If we are to think that the acts of the soul in Brahmaloka are conscious ones it follows that they are not even as evolved as perfect Jivanmuktas who have no consciousness of individuality. The Prarabdha in the Jivanmukta is not experienced by his consciousness; it is not a content of the Absolute Consciousness; it is existent only to the other ignorant Jivas who perceive the existence or the movements of his body.

There is also a passage (Chh. Up. VIII.xiv) which speaks about the soul's entering into Prajapati's abode and assembly hall. The joy which the soul experiences in the consciousness of God is expressed in glowing terms. The Taittiriyopanishad (II.i) says that the knower of Brahman simultaneously enjoys with Brahman-consciousness all that he desires for. The confusion that often hampers our understanding of the exact nature of the different stages in the process of progressive salvation is increased by the fact that the Upanishads are rarely explicit about it, and they find joy in giving intimations of immortality even with regard to a state which we must very much hesitate to take as the highest. Many times one is at a loss to know whether the Upanishads are giving a metaphorical exclamation of the Experience of the Absolute or a real description of the state of one in

Brahmaloka on the way to Krama Mukti. Of course, the instantaneous enjoyments of everything with the Absolute consciousness has to be construed as an intimation of the Ultimate Reality itself, for one in Brahmaloka cannot have a simultaneous experience of the entire existence, which is possible only in the Absolute.

However, one thing is certain, that the criterion of salvation lies in that "By knowing God there is a falling off of all fetters, distresses are destroyed; there is cessation of birth and death; there is breaking up of individuality (or bodily nature), there accrues universal lordship, one becomes absolute, and all desires are satisfied." (Svet. Up. I.11) We cannot, somehow, understand how there can be wish and enjoyment when all desires are satisfied. It is said that "It is simple Lila" or sport of the Divine, which, anyhow, is not an explanation of the mystery. But there is no doubt that even the least wish or action, however much universal it may be, means a state below the most exalted Supreme Being. It is clear that all the various statements regarding the different experiences which the liberated soul is said to have must refer to an objective experience in one or the other of the three stages of Virat, Hiranyagarbha and Isvara, or to the realisation of Brahman Itself. The Upanishads, however, use the word "Brahman" to mean any of the four, and it is this that does not allow us to know much about what they actually mean regarding the definite stages of Truth-realisation. To us it somehow appears that the main stages must be only four: Attainment of (1) Universal objective multiplicity consciousness, (2) Universal subjective multiplicity consciousness, (3) Universal Self consciousness, (4) Transcendental Experience. The Mandukyopanishad testifies to the existence of these four states. But the first three experiences are relative and seem to be existent only so long as one exists as an individualised experiencer. There cannot be any logical proof for the existence of these three objective states beyond an individualistic demand. As a later Vedantin has said, "Those dull-witted persons

who are unable to realise the unconditioned Supreme Brahman are shown compassion through the description of the Qualified Brahman. When their mind is controlled through meditation on the Qualified Brahman, the One free from all limitations reveals Itself.”

—*Swami Krishnananda*

Four Kinds of Mukti

The Bhakta remains in the Loka where Lord Vishnu resides like an inhabitant of a state. This is Salokya Mukti. In Samipya Mukti the Bhakta remains in close proximity with the Lord like the attendant of a king. In Sarupya Mukti he gets the same form like that of the Lord like the brother of a king. In Sayujya Mukti he becomes one with the Lord like salt and water. This is the highest rung in the ladder of Bhakti Yoga.

Difference Between Jivanmukti and Videhamukti (An Anecdote)

The visitor asked, “Swamiji, what is the difference between Jivanmukti and Videhamukti? As long as the body lasts how can there be Videhamukti?” Swamiji replied, “Jivanmukti itself is Videhamukti, but there is slight difference. In a Jivanmukta there is Svarupanasa of the mind. In him Rajas and Tamas are destroyed, but the Sattvic frame of mind remains. It is on account of this Sattvic mind a Jivanmukta is able to do Lokasangraha. In a Videhamukta there is Arupanasa of the mind (destruction of the mind without form). Even Sattva is not there in him. So he cannot do any Lokasangraha.”

Chapter Eleven

EXPERIENCES OF SOME SOUTH INDIAN MYSTICS

Mystic Experiences of Nayanars and Siddhas

The southern part of our great country is a land of poetry and mysticism. Her mountain solitudes, cool and pleasant groves, Mutts and monasteries and temples on the banks of holy rivers, streams or tanks and stately towers pointing to Heaven have inspired the poets and philosophers.

In the post-epic age, just as Buddhism flourished in the northern part of our country, so about this age Jainism dominated the lives of the ancient Tamils in South India. The Jains have enriched the old Tamil literature and they wielded enormous power over the church and the state in South India. Their gift of vegetarianism to the Southerners deserves for ever to be remembered with gratitude. Till the fifth century A.D., the Tamils developed under Jain influence a pessimistic view of life and looked for solace in renunciation, retirement from the world, and severe austerities.

It was at this stage that the sixty-three Saiva Saints made their dramatic appearance at different centres in South India and showed, by their singular example, an entirely new way of life towards attaining salvation. They hailed from various classes of society, the Brahmana, the Kshatriya, the cultivator, the hunter, etc. There were women saints, too. Their cosmopolitan character and unconventional approach to the problem of life found universal acceptance. To them tile was not different from gold and they cared little for achieving salvation. But they loved to serve humanity towards its spiritual uplift. They showed by the life they lived that it was unnecessary to cut away from family or society for spiritual pursuits, so long as one carried a de-

tached attitude to life and viewed it objectively. Service of Lord Siva—call Him by what name you will, but they chose to call God Siva—serving Him in some way or other was all that mattered to them. For instance, one served the Lord by chanting the Maha Rudram remaining in the water; another by feeding a guest in the Lord's Name before dining; another by cleaning the routes to the temple, and so on. The sixty-three Saints and the nine group-saints fit in broadly under four different categories, according to the means which they followed: physical service called Sariya, ritual called Kriya, communion with God called Yoga, and spiritual enquiry called Jnana or Bodha. This four-fold path was also known as Dasa Marga, Putra Marga, Saha Marga and San Marga. The story of their lives contains the lesson and the inspiration, but some of them have, in addition, sung the glory of the Lord.

As the record of their experiences in meditation is apt to be of interest and value to the spiritual aspirant, an attempt is made to present some extracts which contain information on this topic, from their works in the following paragraphs.

Of the many hymns sung in South India the "Thevaram," composed by Saint Appar or Thirunavukkarasu, Sundaramurthy and Jnanasambandar, is accepted as authority by all lovers of the Lord in the South, for gaining His grace and thereby accelerating the pace of evolution. Of the lakhs of hymns sung by the three saints only fragments have come down to us. These were sung by their authors during critical moments of their lives or at the shrines which they had visited. The poems have for their background the philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta which shows the way towards liberation from the shackles of egoism, Karma and illusion (Maya) by the grace of the Guru who is no less than Lord Siva Himself.

Saint Appar was, in his pre-monastic life, called Marulneekkiyar. Although born of Saiva parents, he came under Jain influence and by dint of his scholarship and ability rose

to eminence in the Jain monastic order and he was called 'Dharmasena.' By the grace of Lord Siva, he was afflicted with an incurable colic pain. Under his sister's advice he surrendered to Lord Siva and he was rewarded with instantaneous relief. The king of Kalinga, a Jain, under whom he administered the Jain church, was loth to lose the service of such a valuable convert. Therefore, in order to win him back to Jainism, the king persecuted him by throwing him into a lime kiln. Saint Appar came out of the ordeal cheerfully on account of his remaining in communion with the Lord. This is how he described after his release what he had undergone inside the burning kiln:

"The shelter at the feet of my Lord, my Father, was like the unerring tune of the lyre, the evening moon, the soothing warmth of early spring, the softly-blowing southern breeze, and the stream covered with the blossoming lotus, the home of the honey-bees."

As the saint was in a state of ecstasy, he remained oblivious of his environment. But, as he was also in a superconscious state, that helped him afterwards to recollect his mystic experience which was like something melodious to the ear, pleasing to the eye and agreeable and pleasant all over. And he has put his ideas concisely and beautifully. The lyre represents the sound, the origin of the universe. The moon symbolises illumination or wisdom. Then follows the breeze which caused the first stir in the Universe, and then the Sun, the giver of light, direction, colour, and vital warmth and finally we have the stream, which sustains, along with the light, air and warmth, the life of the whole Universe. Here we have an epitome of creation sung in just four beautiful lines. The mystic could accomplish this feat, having come out of communion with the Lord, Who is Omniscient and Omnipresent.

Saint Sundaramurthy, the Yogi, visited a shrine called "Thirumazaipady." As he was in constant communion with the

Lord, although he led a life of a householder, Sundarar sang: "Of whom else will I think, my Mother, if not Thee?"

"Thou, fair as gold, clad in tiger-skin, decked with shining 'konrai' flowers (marigold), in Thy flaming matted locks, which dazzle like lightning. Thou Eternal Being, purest gem, dwelling at 'Thirumazaipady'. Thou tender as Mother, if I do not think of Thee, on whom else will I meditate?"

The poet has in the first two lines sung the glory of the all-beautiful and Almighty Lord, and in the third line, he shows how by remaining eternal the Lord provides for His creation and, lastly, he confesses his steadfast devotion to the Lord.

While Saint Appar declared his communion with the Lord in the hour of trial, Sundarar confesses his cultivating thought of the Lord constantly as a habit.

Jnanasambandar visited a place called Panayur. He admired the groves of Panayur which presented a scene of honey-laden flowers humming with the sound of bees. His thought turned to the Lord and he sang:

"This is Panayur, the place of Him, Who delights in staying in the hearts of those who meditate on Him with one-pointed devotion. Here the bees love to settle on the honey-laden flowers in the groves and tune their notes to harmony."

The hymn expresses the mystic's experience of bliss, which occurs when meditation culminated in Samadhi. Focusing the thought called 'Dharana' is implied in the phrase, 'thoughts uniting'. This secret process matches well with the colouring the poet gives. As the bees discover plenitude of their sweet food in the flowers, they unite and join their notes in harmony.

In the three verses quoted above the keynote struck by the poets in common is constant communion with the Lord.

Of all the South-Indian mystics, perhaps none has revealed in such clear details the mysteries of communion with the Lord

and the bliss arising from that as Manickavachagar has done in his immortal verses known as "Thiruvachakam" (the sacred text). He is not included among the sixty-three saints or the eighteen Siddhas of South India. He had the unique opportunity of coming face to face with the Lord Who manifested Himself as a supreme Master—which He really is—at a place called "Thiruperundurai," now known as "Avudayar Koil," nine miles south of "Aranthangi," a station in the Southern Railway. This mystic poet loves to refer frequently in his works to this incident which had marked a turning-point in his life.

He sings:

*"To me, who toiled and moiled 'mid fools
that knew not way of final peace,
He taught the way of pious love, so that old
deeds might cease and flee;
Purging the foulness of my will, made me pure
bliss, took for His own
'Twas thus the Dancer gave me grace,
O Rapture; Who so blest as I?"*

(Translation from the original by Sri G.V. Pope).

In these lines the poet shows the limitations of temporal or tuitional knowledge. It fails to take us anywhere on the road to Freedom. The word 'moorker' does not exactly mean 'fools' or 'stubborn ones'. It means 'those who scoff at spiritual culture'. Contact with the Lord had shown him how devotion alone could bestow on him intuition (Aparoksha Jnana), which destroys the fruits of past Karma. His inner self became purified and he was raised to the state of God which none can ever hope to attain. This intensely personal note is characteristic of Manickavachagar.

What is wanted, therefore, is not mere learning but the capacity to feel, to melt away like wax before fire at hearing the

very Name of the Lord. And that is his prayer in the following verse:

“I ask not for kin, nor name, nor place
Nor learned man’s society,
Wilt Thou one boon on me bestow,
A heart to melt in longing sweet,
As yearns her newborn calf the cow,
In yearning for Thy sacred feet?”

(Translation from the original by Ms. F. Kingsbury and G.E. Phillips).

The above lines show that the mystic has relapsed to worldly consciousness and prays to the Lord to lift him up to that higher plane where he may enjoy the bliss of communion. The Lord had already shown him the way to it during his meeting at Thiruperundurai. That can be achieved only through profound devotion even as the cow has for the calf she has yielded. Having drunk of the fountain of bliss it is but natural that he should ask for the favour again and again.

Here is a verse which discloses the bliss of communion with the Lord.

“Thrills and trembles my frame,
Hands are lifted on high,
Here at Thy fragrant feet,
Sobbing and weeping I cry,
Falsehood forsaking, I shout,
‘Victory, Victory, Praise!’
Lord of my life, these clasped hands,
Worship shall bring Thee always.”

(Translation from the original by Ms. F. Kingsbury and G.E. Phillips).

The foregoing lines are characteristic of Manickavachagar. He shows the measure of man and God in those expres-

sions "hands lifted on high", which could not reach beyond "His feet". By the term 'falsehood forsaking' he implies transcending the physical, astral, and other planes which, by virtue of their fleeting existence, are necessarily false and so are the fruits of Karma. The triumph of spirit over matter and the immanence of the Lord are shown in the closing lines.

The Siddhars or the South Indian mystics, of whom eighteen are popularly known, offer the highest spiritual truths in the language of the masses. They have the gift of clothing lofty thoughts in simple expressions. Transcending the borders of caste and convention they may appear to be somewhat shockingly heterodox in some of their songs. Beggars in South India are often found to accost for alms with the songs of the Siddhars on their lips, although they are blissfully ignorant of what they sing!

Here is a verse of Siva Vakkiar, who says why he preserves silence before people of the world.

"For the same reason as water wells up in the ripe cocoanut, so my Lord had entered my heart and made it His Temple. After my Lord had found His Temple in my heart, I ceased to open my mouth before the people of the world."

The mystic reveals to us that as water wells up in the cocoanut when it has developed in due time, so when the aspirant is sufficiently evolved, he grows conscious of the Lord's presence in his heart. Then he does not discuss with worldly-minded people his mystic experience. Who had it are silent. They that talk had it not!

Pattinathar whom it is difficult, if not impossible, to find a more determined adjurer of the world, had at one time tasted of the bliss of communion. He yearns for it as follows:

"O Lord of Kailas, when will that state come about? The body covered with ashes should thrill, and the heart should be pounded and melted like soft clay for love of Thy sacred feet. The unbroken meditation should ripen into bliss and lie down

with tears of joy flooding like a river in torrents over my breast."

The verse is self-explanatory and needs no comments. The advantages of controlling the mind are shown in the following lines ascribed to Saint Agastya, although it is doubtful whether he or anybody else is the author:

"Should the mind come under control, there is no need to utter the spell; should the mind be controlled, it is unnecessary to raise the breath; should mind-control be attained, it is needless to curb our tendencies; should the mind come under control, the spell will prove effective."

His Holiness Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj has given us a wealth of details about mind-control in two of his outstanding publications, viz., 'Mind, Its Mysteries and Control' and 'Concentration and Meditation.'

Conquest of the mind is the greatest conquest, says a Hindi proverb, "If you conquer mind, you have conquered the world."

"Moksha does not mean physical separation from all worldly affairs, but only a state of mind bereft of all impure Vasanas and clinging to worldly things, but yet working as usual amidst them. You must realise God in and through the world. This is the central teaching of the Gita. This is the central teaching of Yoga Vasishtha also.

"But the disciplined (lower) self, moving among sense-objects free from attraction and repulsion, and mastered by the higher Self, goeth to Peace."

—Extract from '*Mind—Its Mysteries and Control*'.

As for the songs of the eighteen Siddhars, they have left us a fair field of spiritual crops, which lie yet unharvested, and which are waiting to be garnered and offered to the outside world. It is, of course, up to abler hands to undertake the task.

The claim of mystic poetry to popularity rests upon its breathing the very soul and spirit of the author. Poetry, properly

so-called, charms us by its genuine lyric impulse. This impulse is sublimated into devotion to God in mystic poetry. Apart from merely reporting their experiences during communion, the mystics give this message of poetry to the world.

(Sri P.S. Varadaraja Iyer)

Saint Tirumular

Tirumular's origin, the circumstances that led to his leaving Kailas and to his settling down in the land of the Tamils, the social forces that inspired him to produce the immortal Tirumantiram,—all these are lost in the mists of antiquity. We do not even know the real name of this great sage. Tirumular is the name he acquired later when he became a shepherd. No historical background is available. We have, therefore, to turn to another great treatise, Periya Puranam, for what it has to say on the story of his life.

Periya Puranam says, the sage came to Tamil Nadu from Kailas to meet his friend Agastya. After offering worship at several famous shrines, he reached Sattanur, a village on the banks of the Kaveri, where he witnessed the tragic spectacle of a herd of cows weeping over the corpse of a shepherd. Evidently, the shepherd had met with sudden death, and the cows, feeling that some great tragedy had befallen their master, stood hovering about the body, unwilling to move away. They smelled it, and tears rolled down their long white cheeks like silvery rivulets.

This moving sight struck a responsive chord in the sage, and he decided to end the agony of the cows. As one who had mastered the eight Siddhis, he knew the technique of moving from one body to another. He cast aside his body in a safe place, and penetrated into the shepherd's body. The shepherd immediately came to life and got up. The cows danced with joy on seeing their master alive again.

The sage who now lived in the body of the shepherd (his name was Mulan) followed the cows back to the village in the

evening. But he stood in the street without entering Mulan's house. Mulan's wife who was awaiting her husband's return came out, and was puzzled to find him standing in the street. She called him in, and moved up to take his hand. But he stepped aside, and asked her not to touch him. He denied he had any relationship whatsoever with her. Then he entered into a neighbouring Mutt, and was soon immersed in deep contemplation.

Mulan's wife would not be consoled easily. How could the poor woman know that her husband was no more and that another saintly soul was now dwelling in his body? She complained to her relatives against her husband's behaviour and cried that he had lost his senses. Some of the elders of the village who saw him at the Mutt were wise enough to perceive that the shepherd was in a state of Samadhi. They, therefore, asked her not to disturb him, but to leave him alone.

When the sage emerged from contemplation the next morning, he straightaway went to the spot where he had left his body. But it was not to be found there! He then realised that he was destined to spend the rest of his life as Mulan the shepherd, that it was God's Will that he should fulfil His purpose as a shepherd.

Known thence forth as Tirumular (derived after the shepherd's name Mulan), he left Sattanur and reached Tiruvavaduthurai, where he sat under a Bodhi tree and passed into a state of deep contemplation. Once a year he woke up, and each time he composed a stanza containing the cream of his spiritual experiences during the year. It took 3000 years for him to compose the 3000 stanzas comprising Tirumantiram.

This account of his life in Peria Puranam gives perhaps a clue to the state of society which obtained at the time of Tirumular. Why did Tirumular choose to come down all the way to the land of the Tamils? How did it come to pass that this great exponent of the Vedas and the Agamas was given the form

of shepherd in a lower rung of the social ladder to expound the great Saiva Siddhanta school of philosophy? And why was Saiva Siddhanta particularly chosen in preference to other systems of thought? It is well that we seek here some answer to these questions, if only for obtaining a correct appreciation of some of the stanzas in Tirumantiram, such as, for instance, those expressing his strong condemnation of the pretensions of impostors masquerading as saints and seers.

Presumably, early Indian thought, which gave birth to some of the greatest metaphysical systems the world has ever seen, received a setback, and an era of sterility and stagnation had commenced. True learning and character were eclipsed by principles and practices justifying social malpractices. The true import of the Vedas and the Agamas was allowed to be lost in the jungle of ritual dogmas. Tamil Nadu, the cradle of Saiva Siddhanta, had become the breeding ground of false prophets who used religion and philosophy for securing personal advantages. Such, obviously, was the state of Tamil society which Tirumular felt compelled to reconstruct on lines set forth in the Vedas and the Agamas and as he understood them in the light of his spiritual experiences.

Tirumular wanted humanity to share the divine bliss which he himself had enjoyed. This sharing of his happiness, this freedom of the soul from ignorance and bondage, cannot however be secured unless, first some of the fundamental tenets of Saiva Siddhanta were instilled into the minds of the people.

Tirumular taught that the liberation of the Pasu (soul) was not dependent on the caste, high or low, of the person in whom it dwells; that the soul can attain freedom only if one followed the right path without allowing oneself to be diverted towards blind alleys; that Saiva Siddhanta, which is the cream of the Vedas and the Agamas, opens the window that reveals true knowledge.

This account, therefore, of Tirumular's teaching Tirumantiram as a shepherd, should serve to emphasise his advice that, inasmuch as the soul and not the body that must be freed from bondage, any person, be he of high or low birth, can seek to attain Sivananda (divine bliss). That he should have come from Kailas to Tamil Nadu, in the extreme South may be taken as reflecting his anxiety that the correct principles of Saiva Siddhanta should again be taught and reinforced in the land of its birth. where social conditions had so altered as to obliterate the prime principles of the Vedas and the Agamas. If the Vedas may be described as the tree of knowledge, the Agamas are its branches and leaves and fruits. While the Vedas content themselves with stating that the soul is the Brahman, the Agamas instruct and guide in leading the soul towards its union with the Absolute Being.

Saint Tirunavukkarasar

Thirunavukkarasar was one of the four saints, the pillars of Saivism, who re-established Siva Worship in South India, at a time when Buddhism and Jainism threatened to wipe out the indigenous religion and culture of the land. A contemporary of Jnanasambandar, one other in this group, Appar as he was otherwise known lost his parents at an early age; he had an only sister, Thilagavathiar, who herself was a Saint; she had dedicated her life to Lord Siva, having lost her fiance who died in a battle. Thirunavukkarasar was a man of great learning and erudition; Marulneekiar, as he was named by his parents, embraced Jainism to the great sorrow of Thilagavathiar. Day and night she invoked Lord Siva to bring her brother back into the fold of Saivism. She was promised that the brother would be subjected to a dire stomach disease, which would cause him to come back to the religion of his ancestors. In the meantime Marulneekiar was made the leader of the Jains, who utilised this luminary for the propagation of their faith. Time was for Saivism to come to its own and Navukkarasar developed the predestined stomach

disease. His co-religionists did all in their power to relieve their leader, but of no avail. Finally in desperation he sought the protection, care and blessing of the famous sister, whose first act was to take him to Veeraddaneshwar temple, and offer prayers of thanks-giving to Lord Veeraddaneshwar.

“Suffering though like a toad, yet wears a jewel in its crown” said Shakespeare. The excruciating pain, incurable as the Jains found it, was the turning point in Appar’s life. He invokes Lord Veeraddaneshwar and loses himself thus:

“O Lord! Veeraddaneshwar, relieve me of this dire disease. I know not of having ever been cruel. Thou hast taken me into Thy fold; I shall invoke Thee continuously day and night; I can no more bear this illness that has come upon me and made me wriggle with an excruciating pain.”

In the above, it is clear that Navukkarasar’s surrender is the result of desperation. Probably due to being a brilliant poet his hymns easily excel those of Manikavachagar.

His Jain friends finding themselves in a precarious position, planned to get him back into their fold by reporting to the king that he feigned the illness, in order to go back to his sister and requested the latter to have him punished. Navukkarasar’s reply to the first in the land, speaks for itself:

“He alone can be spiritual, who can defy kings and spurn wealth and women.”

“The weak man cannot realise this Atman.”

“I am subject to none. I fear not Yama (the lord of death) neither shall I suffer in hell. I am happy. I know not disease. I pay homage to no one. I have given up myself to Him, the Supreme, the Shankaran, that Sovereign with the Kundalam in one ear (the Kundalam in one ear only indicates the Ardhanaareeshwara-Moorti.)”

He refuses to go, but the ministers persuade him and take him to the King, who ill-advised by the Jains, orders that he be

put in a room filled with lime. Appar's faith changed the burning atmosphere of the room into one of a cool shelter. His experience is best expressed hereunder:

"The shelter at Isvara, my Father's feet is that celestial music of the Veena, the gentle breeze, the morning sun, the lotus-covered lake with the humming of the bees."

"The potential fire in wood, the gem of the purest ray, is beyond perception, unseen like the ghee in milk. With knowledge as churner and Love as the rope, churn well your heart and He will appear to you."

Appar was a combination of Jnana (knowledge) and Bhakti. To Thayumanavar learning was an obstacle to God-realisation.

"The uneducated are really the good" said Thayumanavar.

But to Appar knowledge led him to love God. His faith was founded on the rock of conviction born of knowledge.

On seeing Tirunavukkarasar, as cool as a cucumber in that terrible room, the Jains requested the King to get him killed by an elephant. Woe unto them they but dug their own graves, for the elephant paid him homage and becoming turbulent destroyed the evil-doers themselves. The Saint invokes the Lord.

He visualises Siva and being merged in the form automatically, describes his Ishta Murti.

"I am His man, with sandal paste as white as lime, whose head the crescent moon and the jewel adorn, whose body of coral hue is covered with the elephant skin, a snake as big as the one on which Krishna rests adorns his neck and on his crest is the mighty Ganga. I fear nothing, nothing can frighten me."

Appar's faith seems to be the type that could move mountains. He knew he loved. Siva was the rock of his faith.

Even this would not deter the Jains of their evil determination to liquidate the saint. They got him tied to a boulder and pushed him into the sea. This final and last test of the Lord

proved the calibre of Appar's faith. He says, "Come whatever may. I shall always sing the Lord's glories," and invokes Siva with that ever-famous hymn, that immortalises the Divine Pancha Akshara 'Namah Sivaya' the ambrosia of the Saivaites.

"The Brahman! His name is my succour! As effulgent as the sky, if one does but surrender oneself unto his Lotus-Feet, even if one were tied to a boulder and thrown into the sea, one's unfailing saviour is His Name 'Namah Sivaya'."

He floats on this boulder and the waves carry him to Thiru Pathri Puliyur. Overwhelmed by the Lord's mercy, he sings:

"He of Pathiri Puliyur the beloved of the celestials, was my invisible guide; He who delights in creating the three worlds is in my heart; He is my mother, my father, my sisters and brothers and all."

Later he visited various temples and reached Thiruthoonaganar where he invokes Lord Siva to impress the marks of the sacred bull and Trident on his body to purify it of the sin of having been to a Jain.

"There is a request to be made at Thy golden feet; if Thou desireth me to live, impress the mark of Thy Trident on my body, O Lord Thiruthoonaganar of Pennar Kadanthur."

Gradually Appar's vision expands; from seeing Siva only in images, he rises to a stage of seeing Him as the substratum of the Universe. In Chidambaram he perceives Siva as the All or more than All.

"He is Vishnu, Brahma, Fire, Air, Water, Mountain, the great, the presiding Deity of Puliyur; that day which passeth without my singing His glories, is not a day."

He is more and more absorbed in the Lord, to the extent of rising above his physical consciousness.

In Vetharanyam he along with Jnanasambandhar, finds the main door of the temple closed and the side-door used by the worshippers. Requested by Sambandhar he sings:

"Thou Lord with her, of the musical voice (Nada Sakti), as Thy one half, Thou of Maraikadu, whom the world adores, open the doors that Thou may be seen with these eyes." He continues:

"Thou that crushed Ravana with Thy Toe, hast thou no mercy, O Lord! Indweller of Maraikaadu overgrown with Punnai trees! Have the doors opened, that Thou mayst be seen."

The service Appar took upon himself was to sing the infinite glories of Lord Siva, and stimulate Bhakti in all whom he came across. At the final stages he bloomed into a Parabhakta who saw the Lord in everything.

"Thou art the celestial regions, the earth, the sky, the erudition yearned for by the ocean girdleth world, the eye that perceiveth the seven planes, the very pupil in that eye, the vision, the beloved music of the Bhaktas, the ambrosia of their hymns, the Light Supreme, the sight that saved me."

Appar at best was an explorer in the spiritual world. There is no evidence of his soul merging into the Being of God; to Navukkarasar Siva was always a separate entity worthy of his adoration. He might have known the noumena intellectually, but all his experiences were of the phenomena. Even in his last verse he experiences God as separate from himself, i.e., he had not succeeded in annihilating his mind.

"Unto Thy feet I come, Virtuous Lord!"

Saint Manickavachagar

He is a mystic who is one with the cosmos, who realises that his consciousness is of Divine Source, nay, Divinity Itself, enclosed in a physical form, with a mission in life that can only be fulfilled by meeting the conditions and carrying out the world-duties and obligations. The realisation of the Soul-identity of God and man is the mystic's victory in his arduous search. Discovering that reflective experience alone gives access to a deeper life and that every thought attains the dignity of a subtle communication between him and the Divine ministrations.

tions, he begins to break down the numerous physical and mental limitations. God and Soul can only meet in the sanctuary of Consciousness which is Truth itself. Perception of the Divine opulence is an experience of the inner eye. Numerous such experiences are immortalised in the Psalms that the Saiva Saints of South India poured forth in their moments of ecstasy.

Saint Manickavachagar, that glorious Bhakta, one of the most eminent of God's prophets the world all over, after that famous initiation under the 'Kuruntha' tree, makes an impression of his Guru's Feet and continues offering his worship to the sacred feet. One good day he feels that the Lord is merciful to those who sing His praises, even if they did not love Him and expresses his ecstasy thus:

"The peak that bestows unsatiating joy, Siva, He who forever resides in my heart, by His Grace I worship His Feet."

"Thou hast melted me like water, Thou That art my very life." This is Manickavasagar's very experience.

In Puliyur this Saint loses himself in Siva and bursts forth with the "Keerthi Thiru Agaval."

Manickavachagar goes on the king's errand to buy horses for his master. On the way under the Kurutha tree, he sees a Guru along with his disciples. He forgets his errand, surrenders himself unto the Guru, who, he later finds, is the Lord Himself.

"You had come as a Brahmin and revealed to me the celestial planes."

The saint had spent all the money he had brought with him to buy horses, on the temple. When the king inquired as to when the horses would be brought, he pleads to the Lord, Who Himself appears with the horses as a horse-trader. These horses turn into jackals the same night. The king imprisons the minister and subjects him to various tortures. The Vaigai river overflows and inundates the Pandya kingdom. All subjects were ordered to build a bund. An old woman had none to do her share of the work. The Lord Himself offers His services to her in return to

the spoilt ‘pittus’ that she had made. All ‘pittus’ were unsalable. He, the Lord, ate it all but did no work. Pandyan gets furious and hits Him on His back. The whole universe experiences this pain, revealing that the Lord is the substratum of the universe. The king realises the Divine Nature of his minister and prays to him for his forgiveness. These were a sequence of events following Manickavachagar’s initiation. Every experience was as real to him as is hunger to the poor or pain to the sick.

Again he says:

“I saw Him, the Ambrosia that bestows mercy. I experienced His Grace; He walked on earth, (for me). The Ancient, beyond description.”

Manickavachagar realised that “He is beyond thought. He is not within the experience of the senses; He who created the five elements, He who pervades the universe, as does the aroma of a flower, but He, even He, reveals Himself to me today, saves me from being born again.” The saint experiences this state of consciousness. He goes on describing how the Lord is beyond the reach of even Brahma, Vishnu, etc.

“To me He is as real as the Amalaka fruit in my palm.”

A concrete experience the saint is unable to bear: “Praise Thee, how shall I describe this! Is this right on your part? What have you done to me, I do not know; Oh, what Grace you have bestowed on me!”

He experiences a state of consciousness beyond words; “Heart overflows, too deep for words. You have made Ambrosia seethe through every pore.”

“He made the Ambrosia flow through my very bones.”

Again, in Thirusathagam, he expresses the way in which he experiences Siva’s Grace.

“He showed me the invisible, made me hear the unhearable; protected me from being born again.”

"His Grace removed my fear, made me His devotee. He ruled me such that the Ambrosia has melted my heart."

"The heart melts like wax in fire; I cry, I dance, I sing, I praise; stubbornly I hold on to Thee, loving Thee incessantly, the Oceanic Love melts my heart, hairs stand on ends, the world laughs, thinking I am possessed.

"I weep and cry like a calved cow; I do not even dream of another God (when) You appear to me on earth and initiate me."

The Thiruvachagam abounds with Manickavachagar's remembrances of his ecstasies. God to him was a concrete experience.

Chapter Twelve

EXPERIENCES OF SOME CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM MYSTICS

Experiences of Some Christian Mystics

I

The name of the great apostle Saint Paul was Saul. Being the youngest child, his parents affectionately called him Paul. A staunch Pharisee, he was a strict adherent of his Biblical law, and hated everyone of the "Jewish Christians" who failed to observe the prescriptions and prohibitions of the Mosaic Code. He persecuted them. On one occasion he watched the stoning of a Christian by the name of Stephen. Instead of expressing pity at this tragic spectacle, he resolved in burning hatred to erase the entire sect of Christians. With this determination he set out to the city of Damascus; but on the way his soul was possessed by a very remarkable experience. In the twenty-second chapter of the Acts of the Holy Bible, he tells us: "And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come night unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest: And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, arise, and go into Damascus. And there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus."

In the twelfth chapter of the II Corinthians, Saint Paul gives the character of his revelation, thus: "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I know not or whether out of the body I know not; God knoweth) such a one caught up even to the third heaven. And I know such a man (whether in the body or apart from the body I know not; God knoweth) how that he was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. On behalf of such a one will I glory; but on mine own behalf I will not glory, save in my weaknesses. For if I should desire to glory I shall not be foolish; for I shall speak the truth, but I forbear, lest any man should account of me above that which he seeth me to be, or heareth from me. And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations—wherefore that I should not be exalted overmuch there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Paul says in Galatians, that the gospel he preached came to him through revelations of Jesus Christ. "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Intensive poetic insight enabled the great Italian poet to come to experience visions and revelations spiritual in character. In his *Divine Comedy*, Dante says: "The glory of Him who moves everything penetrates through the universe and shines in one part more and in another less. In the heaven that receives most of its light I have been, and have seen things which he who descends from there above neither knows how nor is able to recount." "On a sudden day seemed to be added to day as if he

who is able had adorned the heaven with another sun." "Beatrice (Divine Love) was standing with her eyes wholly fixed on the eternal wheels, and on her I fixed my eyes from there above removed. Looking at her, I inwardly became such as Glaucus became on tasting of the herb which made him consort in the sea of the other gods. Transhumanising cannot be signified in words; therefore, let example suffice for him to whom grace reserves experience. If I were only what of me thou didst last create, O love that governest the heavens, thou knowest, who with the light didst lift me." (*Dante: Paradise*. Translated by Charles Eliot Norton.)

St. John of the Cross (John Yepes) took to excessive austerities, quite early in life. During the twenties of his life, he suffered much anguish of mind and experienced violent temptations. His austerities were too rigorous and he preserved himself in purity and devotion to God. At the beginning of the thirties of his life, he experienced a paradise of interior delights and heavenly sweetness. Whenever he came from prayer, a certain brightness always emanated from his face. When for adhering to some monastic forms, he was put into prison, on a certain night his cell became filled with heavenly light. When the day of his release from the prison was drawing close, he heard from the light surrounding him, the Lord say: "John, I am here, be not afraid; I will set thee free." He said: "The soul of one who serves God always swims in joy, always keeps a holiday, is always in her palace of jubilation, ever singing with fresh ardour and fresh pleasure, a new song of joy and love." Of his entry into divine awareness, Saint John of the Cross says in his poems, "I entered, but I knew not where, and there I stood not knowing, all science transcending. I knew not where I entered, for when I stood within, not knowing where I was, I heard great things. What I heard I will not tell; I was there as one who knew not, all science transcending." "I stood enraptured in ecstasy, beside myself, and in my every sense no sense remained. My spirit was

endowed with understanding, understanding nought, all science transcending."

About the poet and engraver, William Blake, William Rossetti writes in the Prefatory Memoir to The Poetical Works of William Blake: "Rapt in a passionate yearning, he realised, even on this earth and in his mortal body, a species of Nirvana: his whole faculty, his whole personality, the very essence of his mind and mould, attained to absorption into his ideal ultimate, into that which Dante's profound phrase designates "il Ben dell' intellecto." Both in his artistic productions and in his poetry, intuition has played a very large part. He derived his conceptions from supersensuous realms of thought. He says that he wrote his poem *The Jerusalem* "from immediate dictation, twelve or sometimes twenty or thirty lines at a time, without premeditation, and even against my will." Its authors, he maintains, are in eternity.

Much that Walt Whitman wrote savours of the purely spiritual in thought. His was a peculiar mystic temperament. There is that beautiful spiritual interrogation of Whitman:

*Hast never come to thee an hour,
A sudden gleam divine, precipitating, bursting
all these bubbles, fashions, wealth?*

And there is that fine prose passage: "And again lo! the pulsations in all matter, all spirit, throbbing for ever—the eternal beats, eternal systole and dyastole of life in things—wherefrom I feel and know that death is not the ending, as we thought, but rather the real beginning, and that nothing ever is or can be lost nor even die, nor soul nor matter." Addressing himself to God he says:

Thou knowest my manhood's solemn and visionary meditations
O I am sure they really came from Thee,
The urge, the ardour, the unconquerable will,
The potent, felt, interior command, stronger than words,
A message from the Heavens, whispering to me even in sleep,

These sped me on.

One effort more, my altar this bleak sand;
That Thou O God my life hast lighted,
With ray of light, steady, ineffable, vouchsafed of Thee,
Light rare untellable, lighting the very light,
Beyond all signs, descriptions, languages;
For that O God, be it my latest word, here on my knees,
Old, poor, and paralysed, I think Thee.
My hands, my limbs grew nerveless,
My brain feels rack'd, bewilder'd,
Let the old timbers part I will not part,
I will cling fast to Thee O God, though the waves buffet me,
Thee, Thee at least I know.

William Wordsworth too had had his mystic moods.

And in that blessed mood
In which the burden of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and becomes a living soul.

He had felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thought; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man—
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

Alfred Tennyson had had his own experiences of metaphysical and mystical nature. In the *Ancient Sage* we find this passage:

More than once when I
 Sat all alone, revolving in myself
 The word that is the symbol of myself,
 The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,
 And passed into the nameless, as a cloud,
 Melts into heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs
 Were strange, not mine—and yet no shade of doubt
 But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self
 The gain of such large life as matched with ours
 Were sun to spark—unshadowable in words,
 Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world.

In the second volume of Lord Alfred Tennyson: A Memoir by His Son, there is this passage: "He said again, with deep feeling in January, 1869: Yes it is true there are moments when the flesh is nothing to me, when I feel and know the flesh to be the vision, God and the spiritual—the only real and true. Depend upon it the spiritual is the real; it belongs to one more than the hand and the foot. You may tell me that my hand and my foot are only imaginary symbols of my existence. I could believe you, but you never, never can convince me that the I is not an eternal reality, and that the spiritual is not the true and real part of me. These words he spoke with much passionate earnestness that a solemn silence fell on us as he left the room."

II

To the world of general religious experience, the contributions of Christian Mystics are as remarkable as they are varied. The history of Western Mysticism is studded with the most illuminating examples of those great personages who have shifted their lives, through unique subjective individual experiences, from a self-centred existence to a world of rich God-centred living. They had cast aside whatever separated them from the

deepest Ground of their inner being; and, they may be characterised in the famous phrase of Plotinus, the great, Neoplatonic philosopher of Alexandria, as those who sought the "flight of the Alone to the Alone." Many are the forms of illumination they came to attain; and many too are the entralling narrations of their conversions, their transformations, the emancipated conditions of their soul.

The soul of Plotinus was consumed by a passion for the transcendental Reality. His disciple Prophyry claims that on four occasions he saw his master rapt in ecstatic union with "the One". In an ecstatic condition of oneness with God, "the soul," Plotinus maintains, "neither sees, nor distinguishes by seeing, nor imagines that there are two things; but becomes as it were another thing, ceases to be itself and belongs to itself. It belongs to God and is one with Him like two concentric circles: concurring they are one; but when they separate, they are two."

Of his glimpse of the Godhead, a great saint, Augustine, says in the seventh book of his *Confession* "My mind withdrew its thoughts from experience, extracting itself from the contradictory throng of sensuous images, that it might find out what that light was wherein it was bathed... And thus, with the flash of one hurried glance, it attained to the vision of That Which Is." Referring to his preconverted period he says in the same book, "I heard Thy voice from on high crying unto me, 'I am the Food of the full-grown: grow, and then thou shalt feed on Me. Nor shalt thou change Me into thy substance as thou changest the food of thy flesh, but thou shalt be changed into mine'."

The founder of the order of the Franciscan Monks, Saint Francis of Assisi, had a strange vision in which he saw an angle descend from heaven, with the marks of crucifixion on his body, and that he himself felt the pains of crucifixion at the same moment, and preserved the same marks in his flesh. This experience had altered his entire internal life and heightened his transcendental consciousness.

A remembrance of the experience of his individual soul in its participation of the Nature of the Divine Being, made Meister Eckhart, the great Dominican scholar burst into a cry, "Oh, wonder of wonders, when I think of the union the soul has with God! He makes the enraptured soul to flee out of herself, for she is no more satisfied with anything that can be named. The spring of Divine Love flows out of the soul and draws her out of herself into the unnamed Being, into her first source, which is God alone."

How very indispensable is the condition of absolute humility and self-surrender for the flights of mystical experiences of the highest order, the friar-preacher of Strassburg, John Tauler, makes it clear when he says, everything depends on "a fathomless sinking in a fathomless nothingness" He describes the mystic's union with the Divine as finding himself to be "simply in God."

A devoted follower of Meister Eckhart, the blessed Henry Suso was very susceptible to extraordinary visions. One day he was gripped in an ecstasy which lasted for half an hour to an hour. When heavy with suffering, devoid of all consolation, and in a mood of total surrender, of a sudden 'his soul was rapt in his body, or out of his body,' then did he see and hear that which no tongue can express. Was it day or night? He knew not. "It was as it were, a manifestation of sweetness of Eternal Life in the sensations of silence and of rest." He said, "If that which I see and feel be not the Kingdom of Heaven, I know not what it can be: for it is very sure that the endurance of all possible pains were but a poor price to pay for the eternal possessions of so great a joy." He exclaimed, "Oh, my heart's joy, never shall my soul forget this hour!"

Considered as one of the greatest mystics, the blessed John Ruysbroeck has left in his writings such exquisite passages on the true relation of the soul of man with the being of the Divine Lord, as the Heavenly Father "says to each soul in His infinite

loving kindness, ‘Thou art Mine and I am thine: I am thine and Thou art Mine, for I have chosen thee for all eternity’!”

Known as “the mother of thousands of souls,” Saint Catherine of Siena had a peculiar receptivity for the onset of visions and ecstasies. The Voice of the Divine within her deeper Self says, “How glorious is that soul which has indeed been able to pass from the stormy ocean to Me, the Sea Pacific, and in that Sea, which is Myself, to fill the pitcher of her heart.” She had had such ecstatic experiences wherein “the hand does not touch and the feet walk not, because the members are bound with the sentiment of Love.” A great transformation came upon her, when having heard the Divine Voice say to her, “Now will I wed thy soul, which shall ever be conjoined and united to Me!”, she experienced oneness with the Divine, a state of mystic marriage.

Another remarkable woman of mystical experience, Saint Catherine of Genoa, would, many times, “hide herself in some secret place and there stay: and being sought she was found upon the ground, her face hidden in her hands, altogether beyond herself, in such a state of joy as is beyond thought or speech: and being-called—yea, even in a loud voice, she heard not.” “Sometimes,” she says, “I do not see or feel myself to have either soul, body, heart, will or taste, or any other thing except Pure Love.”

The founder of the Society of Jesus, Saint Ignatius Loyola, saw in two of his visions, “the most Holy Trinity as it were under the likeness of a triple plectrum or of three spinet keys” and “the Blessed Virgin without distinction of members.” George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, had received in his twenty-fourth year, an illumination of the hidden truth of things, a knowledge of the fundamental essence of all that is. He describes, “Now was I come up in spirit through the flaming sword into the Paradise of God. All things were new: and all the creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what

words can utter. Great things did the Lord lead me unto, and wonderful depths were opened unto me beyond what can by words be declared; but as people come into subjection to the Spirit of God, and grow up in the image and power of the Almighty, they may receive the word of wisdom that opens all things, and come to know the *hidden unity in the Eternal Being.*"

Jacob Boehme was a God-intoxicated man. Even while he was very young, a divine illumination encompassed him; "he was surrounded by a divine Light for seven days and stood in the highest contemplation and Kingdom of Joy." On a second occasion he entered into an inward ecstasy as a result of gazing fixedly upon a burnished pewter dish. It seemed to him as if he could look into the very soul of all things. His own statement is that he "looked into the deepest foundations of things." His vision of the transcendental reality informing the heart of the phenomenal world, was a frequent experience. He says he "saw and knew the Being of all beings, the Byss and the Abyss." Delin-eating the union of the soul with the Godhead, he tells us, "I give you an earthly similitude of this. Behold a bright flaming piece of iron, which of itself is dark and black, and the fire so penetrateth and shineth through the iron, that it giveth light. Now, the iron doth not cease to be; it is iron still; and the source (or property) of the fire retaineth its own property; it doth not take the iron into it, but it penetrateth (and shineth) through the iron; and it is iron then as well as before, free in itself: and so also is the source or property of the *fire*. In such a manner is the soul in the Deity; the Deity penetrateth through the soul, and dwelleth in the soul, yet the soul doth not comprehend the Deity, but the Deity comprehendeth the soul, but doth not alter it (from being a soul) but only giveth it the divine source (or property) of the Majesty."

Experiences of Jesus Christ

The Gospel according to Saint Mark tells us that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptised of John in Jordan. "And straightaway coming up out of the water, he saw the heaven opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him; and there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness and he was there in the wilderness for forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him."

In St. Mathew, chapter seventeen, we read: "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart. And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, "Tell the vision to no man until the son of man be risen again from the dead."

Christ-Consciousness

The Golden Key of Divine Wisdom is never found in the unillumined mortal mind. We discover it only when our consciousness has risen above the unawakened little "I-me-mine"

self lost in the dark fog of materialistic values, when our consciousness has become fused with the Light of the Soul.

It is only through the Light of the Soul that we are able to enter into the illuminating Cosmic Awareness, not mere intellectual assent or theory. Once awakened in the Light of the Soul, we behold the same Light everywhere, in all things, whether animate or inanimate, and instead of separative differences, we see the Eternal Oneness and Sameness behind all evolving entities.

In the light of the transformed consciousness it is realised that we are all of the same immortal divine parentage, that we are all undying golden flames of the same holy, consuming, life-giving fire of the Reality. The all-pervading awareness of the illumined consciousness reveals that centre and periphery, beginning and ending, big and little, gain and loss, are one. It is a spontaneous rhythm that flows of itself in the effortless effort of a calm, waveless, infinite ocean of illumined space, though, at the same time, centred in a profound, inner, all-enveloping, motionless Silence.

In defining the highly abstruse and controversial meaning of Nirvana, the Buddha taught that it is that state wherein "the Self-realisation of Noble Wisdom is fully entered into, where the manifestation of the essential and intrinsic oneness of all life through perfect Love expresses itself for the enlightenment of all, where compassion for others transcends all thoughts of self." Christ Himself teaches the same truth when he says that he who loses his life, the fleeting little grasping life of the selfish personality, shall find it in the immortal life of the soul unto Eternity. This Christ-consciousness is achieved through spiritual practices and by living the teachings of Jesus Christ.

(*Mark Halpern*)

Experiences of Muslim Mystics

The question of perfection of man, according to Muslim mystics might be answered in different ways. In a word, a perfect man may be defined as a man who has fully realised his essential oneness with the Divine Being in whose likeness he is made. The essence of Muslim saintship is nothing less than divine illumination, immediate vision and knowledge of things unseen and unknown, when the veil of sense is suddenly lifted and the conscious self passes away in the overwhelming glory of true Light.

According to the publication titled "Persian Mystics":

"Muslim mystics declare life to be a journey over an unknown path which is as strait and narrow as a razor. There is no other light but that of faith to guide the seeker, no sustenance but devotion. The track ahead cannot be seen, going is uncertain, and pitfalls await the unwary. The seeker must travel in the dark. He must not cry for a candle to grope in the gloom or seek the rush light of reason. He must go steadily forward in the hope of reaching a great illumination which awaits him at the journey's end. It would profit little to dwell on the system of Sufism. Volumes have been written in Persian and other languages on the subject. It is not a system really, it is a way of life. It is beyond the range of reason. It cannot be comprehended but it can be realised."

(Dr. M.H. Syed)

APPENDIX

Why God Created Man

(An Anecdote)

Sri Thakur Singhji asked Swamiji, "Swamiji! Why has God created Man?"

"In order to realise Him," came Swamiji's quick reply.

"If it was to realise God that God created Man, then why did He create Man, separate him from Himself, at all?"

"That is a transcendental question. It is beyond the power of the little, finite, intellect to understand these transcendental truths. You will have to sell the intellect, purchase intuition, and then you will know the Why of creation—not till then. To ask for an explanation before that is like putting the cart before the horse. You know that somehow you have been created. You are ever hankering after absolute peace, absolute bliss and immortality. You know that these things cannot be had in the finite, perishable objects of this world. They can be had only in God or the Absolute. Even this incessant desire for peace and happiness only indicate that the Self is of the nature of Absolute Peace and Bliss. There is a constant inner urge to know more and more, to live eternally, and to enjoy perpetual happiness. In his ignorance man does not understand that this itself is proof that there is a constant urge in him to realise the Self, to realise God. That is man's foremost duty. There is no use trying to find an answer to the Why of creation: what is most important is to do something to realise God—and that something is Sadhana."

"But, man does not want to do Sadhana! Most of the people are satisfied with the little objects of the senses. They do not

even stop to think what their duty really is—as you have begun to think. They take birth, earn wealth, enjoy and suffer, and then they die. It is only a Viveki who will begin to enquire into the nature of things, and aspire for the Eternal. When that Eternal Truth is realised, this creation appears as the Sport of the Lord. Therefore, in the Brahma Sutras it is declared that the Supreme Being created this universe out of mere sport—with no other motive. It is the Lila of the Lord. Why do they say it is His Lila? It is only to show that it is beyond the grasp of man's little intellect. Do, do, do something to realise the Lord. The heart must expand. Faith must be deep-rooted. People should share what they have with others. The spirit of renunciation must be awakened. All good qualities like compassion, selflessness, egolessness, must be cultivated. Then these Transcendental Questions will be answered—by intuition.”

Pradhana is not Brahman: When the visitor asked, “Is Pradhana to be taken as Brahman?” Swamiji replied, “No. Pradhana is Prakriti, Avyaktam or Maya. It is not Brahman. Should a Chaprasi be taken as a king?”

Seeds and Fruits of Yoga

Path of Karma Yoga

Selfless work (service of humanity) is the seed. Narayana Bhava (feeling that all creatures are manifestations of the Lord and I am serving Lord in all beings) is the shower. Expansion of the heart is the flower. Purity of the heart is the fruit.

Path of Bhakti Yoga

Devotion is the seed. Faith is the root. Service of Bhagavatas is the shower. Communion with the Lord is the fruit.

Nishtha is the seed. Bhava is the plant. Mahabhava is the flower. Prema or Divine Love for the Lord is the fruit.

Path of Hatha Yoga

Asana (pose) is the seed. Pranayama (restraint of the breath) is the root. Regular practice is the shower. Good health is the flower. One-pointed mind (Ekagrata) is the fruit.

Path of Raja Yoga

Yama (self-restraint), Niyama, etc., are the seeds; Dharana (concentration) is the root; Isvarapranidhana (self-surrender to the Lord) is the shower. Dhyana (meditation) is the flower. Asamprajnata Samadhi (superconscious state) is the fruit.

Path of Jnana Yoga

Viveka (discrimination) is the seed. Vairagya (dispassion) is the root. Guru's Grace is the shower. Brahma-Jnana (knowledge of the Self) is the flower. Moksha (liberation) is the fruit.

Philosophical Truths

1. Philosophy is the way, not simply of explaining what ought to be, but of directly experiencing that which really exists.
2. Philosophy is an examination of the implications of experience.
3. Life is an experience meant to train the individual for a higher, deeper and more expanded state of existence, through the experience of the results of actions.
4. Self-realisation is not the acquirement of something new, but is the discovery of the forgotten Treasure ever present within.
5. Philosophy is the expression of the inner urge to know the Self, to realise what really is.
6. Truth is eternal life and existence. Untruth is change, decay and death.
7. Truth is unconditioned by any other experience, save its own.

8. In this universe there is but one Law, the Law of Cause and Effect.

9. The good and evil of this world are the reactions of the wants of individuals.

10. None really loves anything for its own sake but for one's own sake.

11. Life is impossible without death. Death is another aspect of life.

12. Knowledge is not an action. Knowledge is Being.

13. You cannot reach yourself or attain yourself or move towards yourself, except by knowing yourself.

14. There is no matter apart from its qualities, and no mind apart from its functions.

15. There is no such thing as accident or change or fate or luck, except only the results of one's own previous actions.

16. Perception is, in effect, the exhaustion of a desire. Contact is not a method of spending up a desire but a means of speeding it up.

17. All creation is the family of God.

A Renowned Army Officer's Experiences

One of the top-ranking officers of the Indian Army is also a highly evolved Yogi. He is very, very regular in his meditation and study of scriptures; he used to meditate even on the battle-field. He narrates the following interesting experiences during meditation:

"A short while after I took up the practice of meditation in all earnestness, I had a very strange experience. I always sat for my Dhyana, with my hands on my knees, palms facing upwards, and fingers in *chinmudra*. I invariably found that after a few minutes of meditation, my forearms began to "turn round" so that the palms face downwards and what was more astonishing, one or the other of the arms would slowly flex itself at the

elbow, that arm would raise itself, till the palm (with the fingers still in *chinmudra*) would almost touch the chest.

"I have heard it said that the Yogi, during meditation, feels light as a feather. The physical feeling of lightness might be caused by the following of phenomenon: during meditation, the back gets straightened up, and the spinal chord inside the spinal column hangs without being unnaturally bent or pressed against the vertebrae. This is bound to give a feeling of lightness. I have always felt that as meditation gets deeper and deeper, one does not even wish to breathe. The breath thins out almost imperceptibly. Then I feel as though I am physically lifted up from the ground. I don't disturb myself to ascertain if I am suspended in mid-air. But the following phenomenon makes me feel that perhaps there is an actual levitation. I sit for my Dhyana in a half-Siddhasana posture. Now, after a few minutes of deep meditation I feel that the ankles have parted from each other and that the feet tend to 'drop down.'

"The third experience is this: what we wish for at certain moments come true. I have experienced this on several occasions, even when very great personalities are concerned, who hold their own opinion strongly. The thought that arises in our mind somehow influences them. I have only one explanation for it. At the moment we are very, very close to God. Then the thought arises in our mind. The proximity of God enables the wish to "drop into His Lap," as it were, and form part of His Divine Will. Then His Will works itself out and our wish is automatically fulfilled, without our striving for it even mentally. The Yogi at this moment does not want to influence anyone and does not even want his prayer to be heard by God. He merely wishes it, and the wish is "taken over" by Him as part of His Will.

Spiritual Experiences

Balls of white lights, coloured lights
 Sun, stars, during meditation
 Divya Gandha, Divya taste,
 Vision of the Lord in the dream,
 Extraordinary, superhuman experience,
 Vision of the Lord in the human form,—
 Sometime appearing in the form of a Brahmin,
 Or old man, leper, outcaste in rags,—
 Talking to the Lord,
 Are the preliminary spiritual experiences.
 Then comes cosmic consciousness or Savikalpa Samadhi
 Which Arjuna experienced.
 Eventually the aspirant enters
 Into Nirvikalpa Samadhi,
 Wherein there is neither seer nor seen,
 Wherein one sees nothing, hears nothing,
 Wherein one becomes one with the Eternal.

Song of Sadhana

(Thars: Sunaja)

Sitaram Sitaram Sitaram Bol
 Radheyshyam Radheyshyam Radheyshyam Bol.
 Sadhana is steadyng the mind and fixing it on the Lord.
 It gives freedom, bliss, peace and immortality.
 Friends! Plod on patiently like the farmer at his plough,
 Be persevering, be steady in your daily Sadhana.
 Destroy Tandri, Alasya and building castles in the air,
 Take light food and drive off sleepiness.
 Be regular in your Japa, Kirtan and meditation,
 Regularity in Sadhana is of paramount importance.
 Just as you separate the pith from the Munja grass,
 Separate this Atman from the five Koshas.
 Peace, cheerfulness, contentment and fearlessness
 Indicate that you are advancing in the spiritual path.

II

Purification, concentration, reflection, meditation,
Illumination, identification, absorption, salvation.
Inspiration, illumination, revelation
Rapture, ecstasy, vision of Truth
These are the experiences in meditation.



TWENTY IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Get up at 4 a.m. daily. This is Brahmamuhurta which is extremely favourable for meditation on God.
2. **Asana:** Sit on Padma, Siddha or Sukha Asana for Japa and meditation for half an hour, facing the East or the North. Increase the period gradually to three hours. Do Sirshasana and Sarvangasana for keeping up Brahmacharya and health. Take light physical exercises such as walking, etc., regularly. Do twenty Pranayamas.
3. **Japa:** Repeat any Mantra as pure Om or Om Namo Narayanaya, Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya, Om Sri Saravanabhavaya Namah, Sita Ram, Sri Ram, Hari Om, or Gayatri, according to your taste or inclination, from 108 to 21,600 times daily.
4. **Dietetic Discipline:** Take Sattvic food, Suddha Ahara. Give up chillies, tamarind, garlic, onion, sour articles, oil, mustard, asafoetida. Observe moderation in diet (Mitahara). Do not overload the stomach. Give up those things which the mind likes best for a fortnight in a year. Eat simple food. Milk and fruits help concentration. Take food as medicine to keep the life going. Eating for enjoyment is sin. Give up salt and sugar for a month. You must be able to live on rice, Dhal and bread without any chutney. Do not ask for extra salt for Dhal and sugar for tea, coffee or milk.
5. Have a separate meditation-room under lock and key.
6. **Charity:** Do charity regularly, every month, or even daily according to your means, say six paisa per rupee.
7. **Svadhyaya:** Study systematically the Gita, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, Vishnu-Sahasranama, Lalita-Sahasranama, Aditya Hridaya, the Upanishads or the Yoga Vasishtha, the Bible, the Zend Avesta, the Koran, the

Tripitakas, the Granth Sahib, etc., from half an hour to one hour daily, and have Suddha Vichara.

8. Brahmacharya: Preserve the vital force (Veerya) very, very carefully. Veerya is God in motion or manifestation—Vibhuti. Veerya is all power. Veerya is all money. Veerya is the essence of life, thought and intelligence.

9. Prayer Slokas: Get by heart some prayer Slokas, Stotras and repeat them as soon as you sit in the Asana before starting Japa or meditation. This will elevate the mind quickly.

10. Satsanga: Have Satsanga. Give up bad company, smoking, meat and alcoholic liquors entirely. Do not develop any evil habits.

11. Fast on Ekadasi: Fast on Ekadasi or live on milk and fruits only.

12. Japa Mala: Have a Japa Mala (rosary) round your neck or in your pocket or underneath your pillow at night.

13. Mouna: Observe Mouna (vow of silence) for a couple of hours daily.

14. Speak the Truth: Speak the truth at all costs. Speak a little. Speak sweetly.

15. Reduce your wants: Reduce your wants. If you have four shirts, reduce the number to three or two. Lead a happy, contented life. Avoid unnecessary worry. Have plain living and high thinking.

16. Never hurt anybody: Never hurt anybody (*ahimsa paramo dharmah*). Control anger by love, Kshama (forgiveness) and Daya (compassion).

17. Do not depend upon servants: Do not depend upon servants. Self-reliance is the highest of all virtues.

18. Self-analysis: Think of the mistakes you have committed during the course of the day, just before retiring to bed (self-analysis). Keep daily diary and self-correction register. Do not brood over past mistakes.

19. **Fulfil duties:** Remember that death is awaiting you at every moment. Never fail to fulfil your duties. Have pure conduct (Sadachara).

20. **Surrender to God:** Think of God as soon as you wake up and just before you go to sleep. Surrender yourself completely to God (Saranagati).

This is the essence of all spiritual Sadhanas.

This will lead you to Moksha.

All these Niyamas or spiritual canons must be rigidly observed.

You must not give leniency to the mind.

About This Book:

Spiritual Experiences is a publication that tries to portray the aspirant's perception of the working of his psyche as well as of the forces of the astral world. Self-realisation is the consummation of all experiences and transcends the realm of the mind, and is, therefore, indescribable. Yet, adumbrations have been attempted herein, through the medium of words, to describe the supersublime state of cosmic consciousness, and of the other preceding phases of occult perception.

The book has been divided into twelve chapters. The first and second relate to the nature and states of consciousness and cosmic consciousness, respectively. The third chapter deals with the various experiences that the aspirant has to pass through in the path of Meditation, and in the fourth are continued the different phases of experience found in Samadhi in its various forms and attained through the various paths of Sadhana. Chapters five, six and seven discuss the numerous psychic powers attained by the Yogi, while in chapter eight are given the characteristics of spiritual progress. Chapters nine and ten deal with the experiences of the Jnana Yogi and the state of liberation, respectively. In the last two chapters are given the experiences of some of the South Indian and Christian mystics.

We hope that the book will be found useful to all those who tread the spiritual path.



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